



Okotoks Growth Strategy

Okotoks

Contents

- 1. Introduction4
- 2. Identity Driven Growth13
- 3. Growth Projections & Land Needs19
- 4. Growth Considerations27
- 5. Growth Scenario Testing46
- 6. Growth Management Framework54

Support Reports

- Land Supply Analysis Memo, Urban Systems Ltd., 2025..... 66
- Growth and Financial Analysis Technical Report, Applications Management Consulting Limited, 2025 67
- Servicing Strategy Brief, ISL, 2025 162

Figures

- Figure 1. Population Growth Rates for Select Municipalities (2015-2024)7
- Figure 2. Average Annual Growth Rate7
- Figure 3. Okotoks Age Pyramid8
- Figure 4. Housing Type by Structure 20249
- Figure 5. Housing Starts (2015-2024)..... 10
- Figure 6. Employment Snapshot 11
- Figure 7. Okotoks Labour Force by Occupation 12
- Figure 8. 25 Year Population Projections..... 22
- Figure 9. 25 Year Employment Forecast..... 23
- Figure 10. Projected Residential Gross Developed Lands 24
- Figure 11. Housing Unit Demand Projections to 2049..... 25
- Figure 12. Projected Employment Gross Developed Lands..... 26
- Figure 13. Total Potential Developable Lands..... 29
- Figure 14. Planned Land Supply..... 30
- Figure 15. Planned Land by Proposed Land Use..... 30
- Figure 16. Unplanned Lands 31
- Figure 17. Natural Assets and Defensive Areas 33
- Figure 18. Total Capital Expenditures 2024 - 2049 By Growth Scenario..... 35
- Figure 19. Debt Limit Used 2024-2049..... 36
- Figure 20. Projected Operating Costs Per Capita 37
- Figure 21. Balancing the Rate of Growth..... 40
- Figure 22. Visualization of Community Build-out 41
- Figure 23. Growth Sequencing Map..... 43
- Figure 24. Phase 1 Horizon 44
- Figure 25. Phase 1 & 2 Horizon..... 44
- Figure 26. Phase 1, 2 & 3 Horizon 45
- Figure 27. Phase 1, 2, 3 & 4 Horizon..... 45
- Figure 28. Alternative Housing Mix Average Tax Impact 2024-2049 49
- Figure 29. Alternative Tax Assessment Average Tax Impact 2024-2049..... 50
- Figure 30. Average Tax Impact (2024 - 2049)..... 51
- Figure 31. Projected Fiscal Contribution (2049 Snapshot) - Mid-High Scenario . 52
- Figure 32. Unplanned Lands 57



Land Acknowledgement

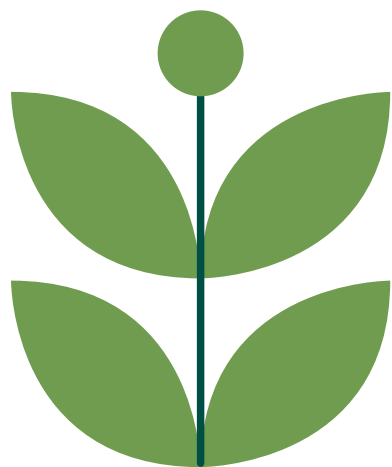
The Town of Okotoks acknowledges the original stewards of this land that we know and call Treaty 7 Territory, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy First Nations the Kainai, Siksika and Piikani. The Stoney Nakoda First Nations, which includes the Bearspaw, Chiniki and Goodstoney, the Dene First Nation of Tsuut'ina and the Metis Nation of Alberta. We vow to continue honouring and respecting the Indigenous Peoples Sacred and Traditional ways of life and will carry on this special relationship with the land so that generations to come can enjoy, use, and live off the land as their ancestors did. We honour and respect this space, the water, the animals, and all the beings who have a spirit and have been here long before us.

1.0 Introduction



What is the Growth Strategy?

Growth is complex and constantly evolving, requiring thoughtful planning to ensure it continues to reflect the community's distinct identity. To guide growth in a way that is sustainable, community-focused, and reflective of Okotoks' core values, the Town of Okotoks has developed a Growth Strategy.



The Growth Strategy supports the implementation of the Municipal Development Plan considering implications of growth, including how, when and where growth occurs. Through the exploration of trade-offs, the Growth Strategy supports decision-making that considers multiple perspectives - ensuring we grow in a way that enhances quality of life for current and future residents.

The Growth Strategy is a practical tool to help Council and Administration make informed choices, from day-to-day decisions to long-term planning of our lands. As our community evolves, this strategy will be updated as needed to keep our growth aligned with who we are and where we want to go.

Connection to Okotoks Municipal Development Plan

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a statutory plan that is the overarching visioning and policy document outlining land-use planning and development. The primary function of the MDP is to provide guidance on the long-range planning and physical growth of the Town. It also addresses the social, economic, cultural, historical, physical and environmental health of the community.

The MDP envisions growth that is sustainable, and which supports a high quality of life for residents. Through a Managed Growth philosophy, the MDP aims to harness growth and development for improved livability, opportunity, sustainable development, and community resilience. It promotes the creation of complete, compact communities offering diverse housing and services so all people can live, work, play and thrive in their neighbourhood. While the MDP develops the vision for a growing Okotoks, this Growth Strategy provides the roadmap, targets, and tools required to realize that growth over the next 25-years.

Okotoks at a Glance

Located along the Sheep River, at the junction of the Foothills Parkland and Foothills Fescue natural subregions, the Town of Okotoks is a vibrant community recognized for its distinctive character, strong sense of identity, and long-standing commitment to environmental sustainability. Situated within a unique convergence of urban and rural influences, the area holds deep cultural and historical significance for the Blackfoot, Stoney Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina Nations, who have lived on and stewarded this land for over 10,000 years. In recent decades, Okotoks has experienced consistent population growth and continued urban development. Understanding past trends in population, employment, housing, and demographics is essential to guiding responsible growth and ensuring the community is well positioned to meet future needs.



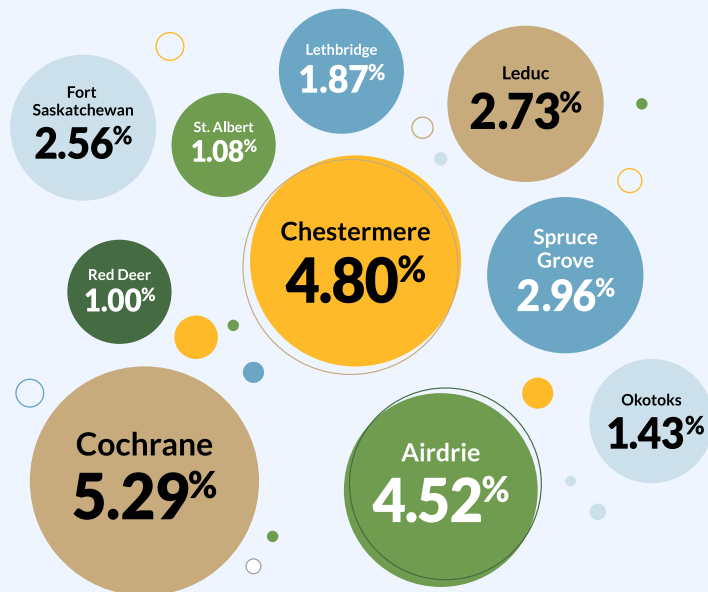
POPULATION

Today, the Town of Okotoks is home to approximately 33,100 residents (2025) and has historically been one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta, experiencing several decades of rapid growth since the 1980s, and surpassing growth trends experienced in Calgary, and across Alberta. Between 1997 to 2007, Okotoks grew at an startling annual average rate of 7.4% per year and peaked at 10% in 2008.

The rate of growth slowed after 2011 due to water capacity issues and the introduction of a Water Allocation Policy in 2010, which restricted growth based on available water license capacity. Nearby communities like Airdrie and Cochrane, which did not implement similar policies, experienced faster growth compared to Okotoks. Over the past decade (2015-2024) Okotoks has grown at an average rate of 1.4%, significantly lower than other mid-sized communities in the Calgary region.

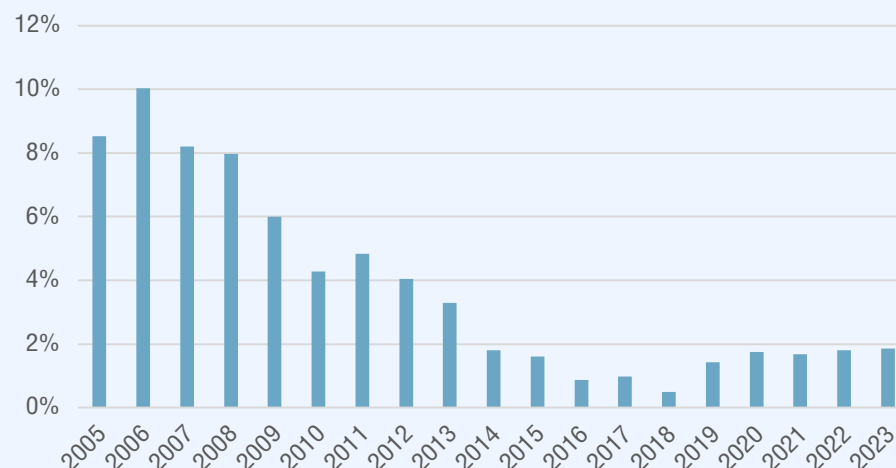
Despite long-standing growth limitations imposed by water supply constraints, the Foothills-Okotoks Regional Water Project, expected to be operational in 2026, will bolster the community's water resources and allow for new growth opportunities in Okotoks. While this project will enable the Town to accommodate growth, it does not signal unrestrained expansion. Rather, it supports a responsibly managed, identity-driven approach to planning—ensuring that any new development aligns with the community's values, vision, and financial capacity.

Figure 1. Population Growth Rates for Select Municipalities (2015-2024)



SOURCE: OFFICE OF STATISTICS AND INFORMATION, ALBERTA
TREASURY BOARD AND FINANCE

Figure 2. Average Annual Growth Rate



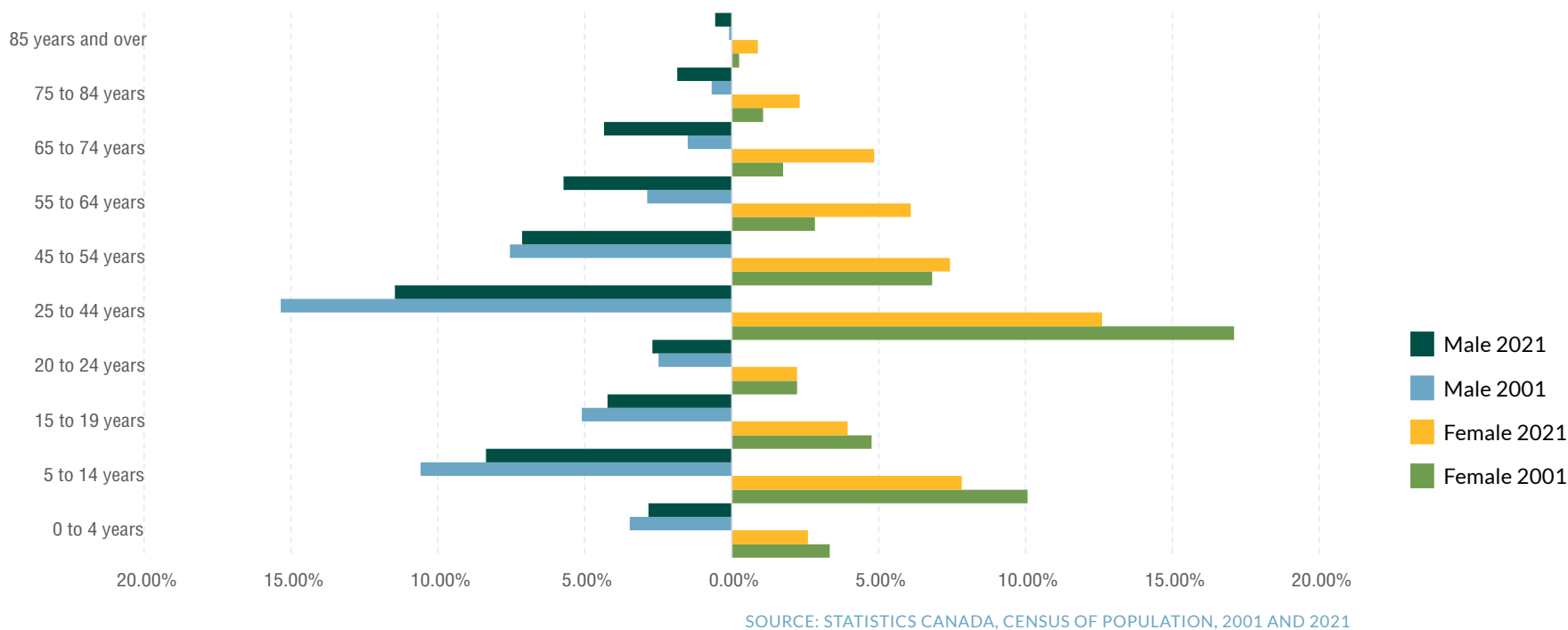
SOURCE: OFFICE OF STATISTICS AND INFORMATION, ALBERTA
TREASURY BOARD AND FINANCE

DEMOGRAPHICS

In Okotoks, the working age population (25-64) continued to grow from 2001 to 2021, though it saw a slight proportional decline as a share of the total population. Meanwhile, the senior population (65+) increased more than sevenfold within the same timeframe, representing a change from 5% to 15% of the population. This reflects a clear ageing trend in Okotoks, further supported by the rise in median age from 32.3 to 39.2.

In this time, Okotoks saw changes in the local workforce – such as employment shifts toward professional/technical services and retail trade – as well as household sizes, including increases in one and two-person households which all point to an altering socio-economic profile in the town.

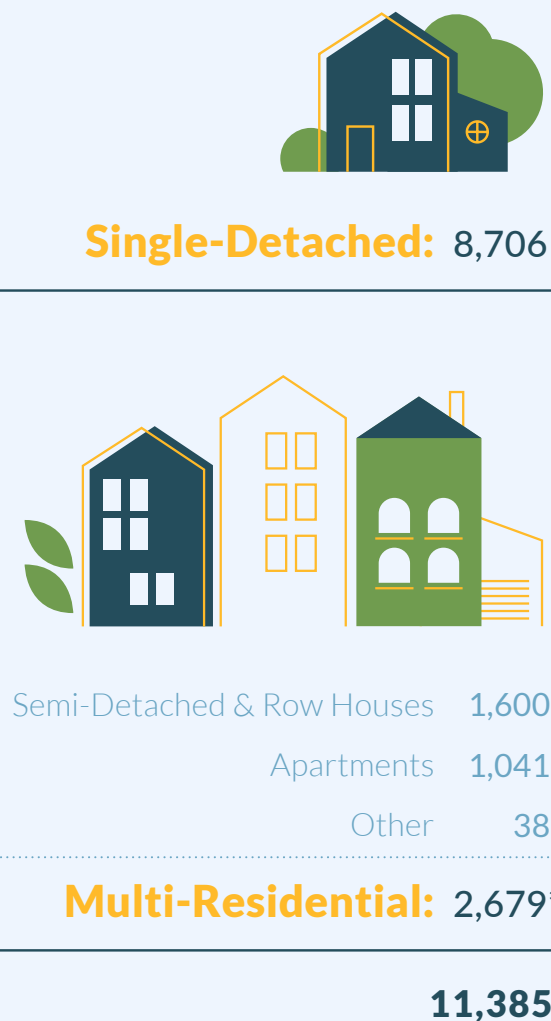
Figure 3. Okotoks Age Pyramid



HOUSING

As of 2024 there were approximately 11,385 housing units in Okotoks. Low-density housing is most prominent, with single-detached representing 77% of housing in Okotoks, followed by semi-detached and row house units at 14% of the total housing stock, collectively. The demand for higher-density housing is expected to increase due to factors such as affordability concerns and the needs of an ageing population seeking alternative housing solutions.

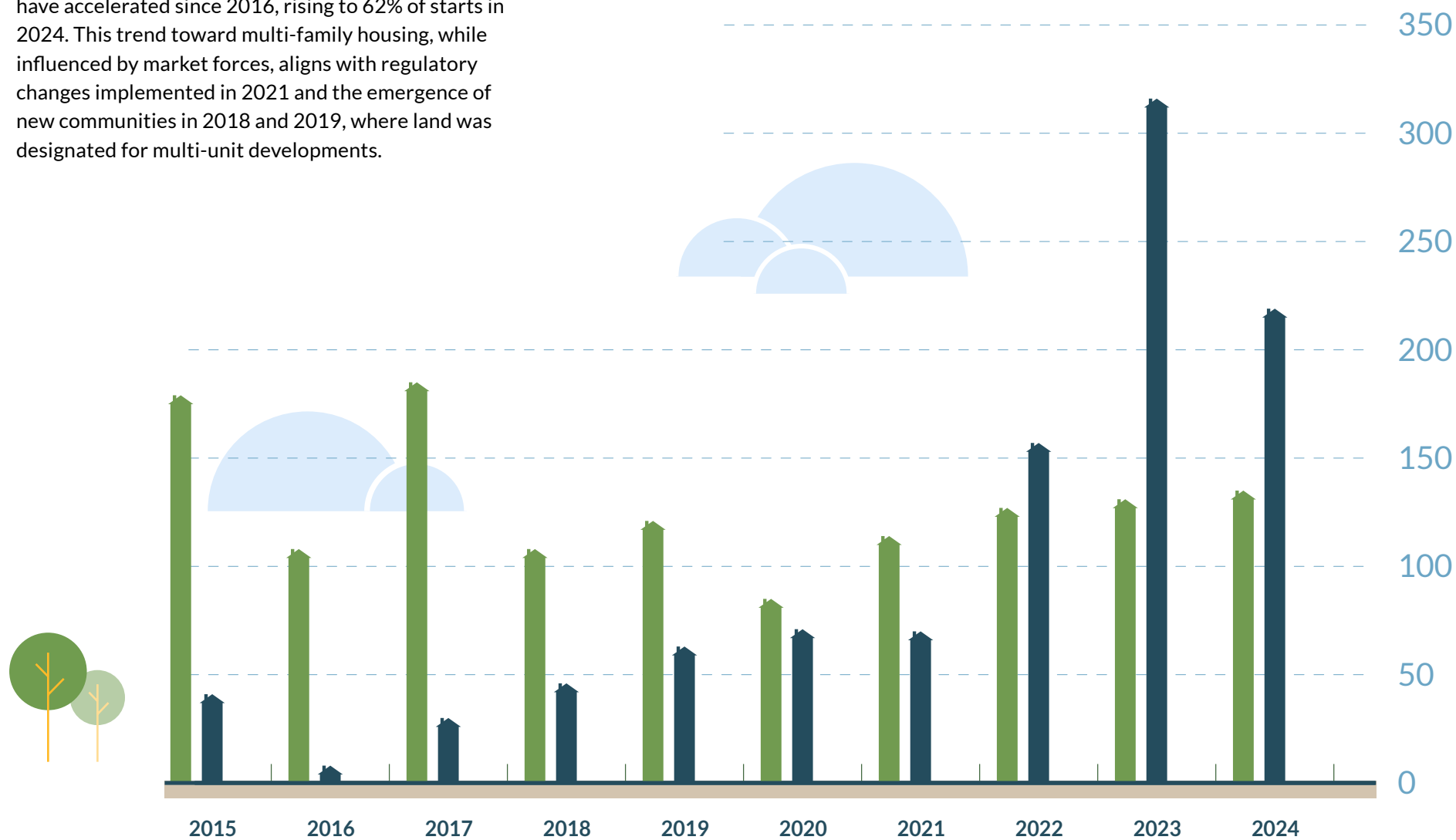
Figure 4. Housing Type by Structure 2024



*From a tracking perspective, the Town considers all non-single-detached housing (i.e., semi-detached, row housing, and apartments) as multi-residential units.

Over the past decade, there has been an average of 231 housing starts per year, with 354 starts in 2024. Multi-unit housing starts as a proportion of total starts have accelerated since 2016, rising to 62% of starts in 2024. This trend toward multi-family housing, while influenced by market forces, aligns with regulatory changes implemented in 2021 and the emergence of new communities in 2018 and 2019, where land was designated for multi-unit developments.

Figure 5. Housing Starts (2015-2024)



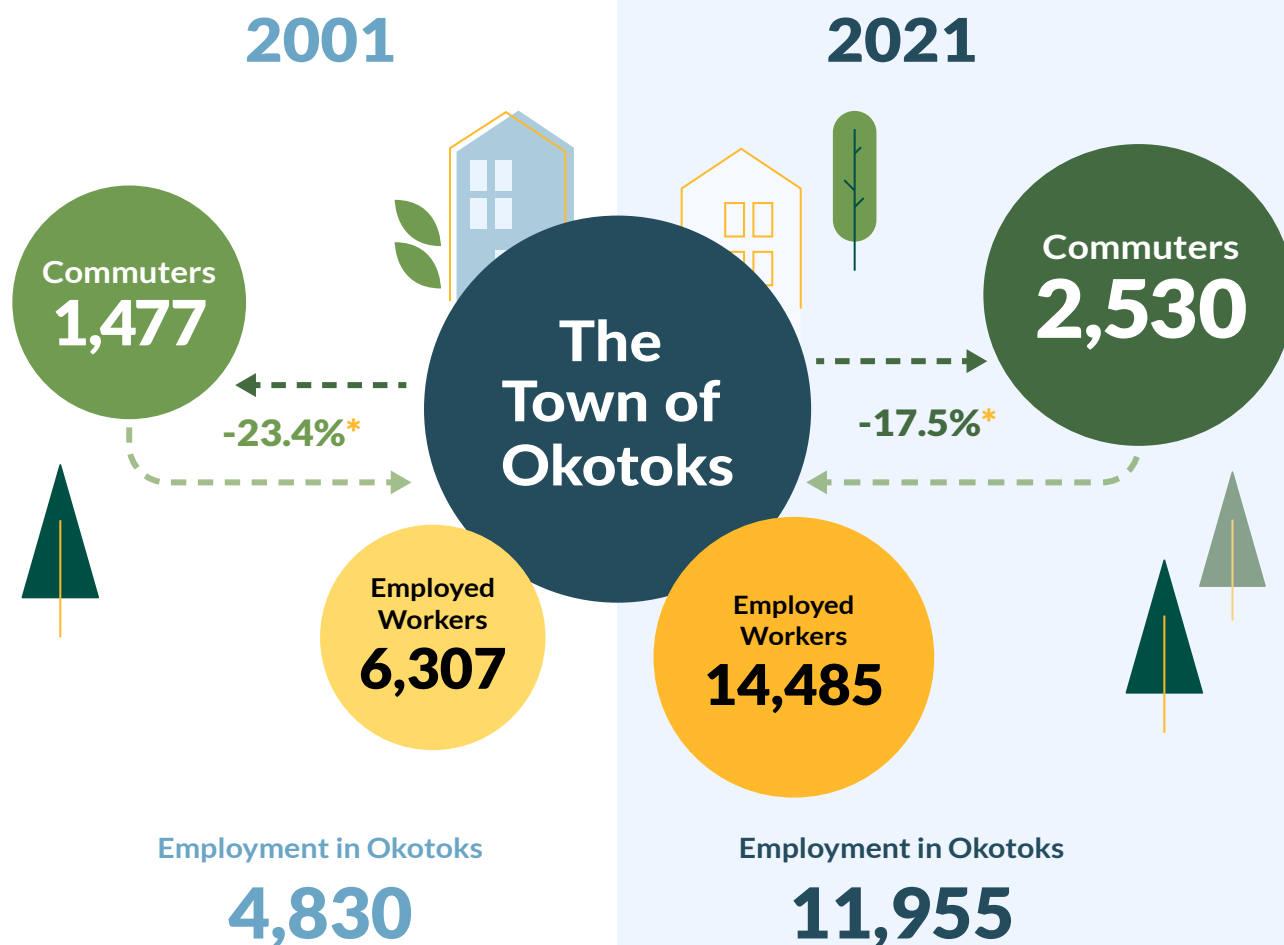
SOURCE: TOWN OF OKOTOKS, BUILDING PERMIT DATA

Single Detached Multi-Family

EMPLOYMENT

Okotoks' employment base grew from 6,307 in 2001 to 14,485 in 2021, resulting in an increase of over 129%. Despite this growth, the employment rate declined from 74.60% to 61.77%, while the unemployment rate rose from 3.80% to 9.21%. Although the number of jobs in Okotoks more than doubled, job creation has not kept pace with overall population and labour force growth. As a result, the number of commuters has remained relatively constant between 2001 and 2021, with nearly one in five employed residents traveling outside the community for work.

Figure 6. Employment Snapshot

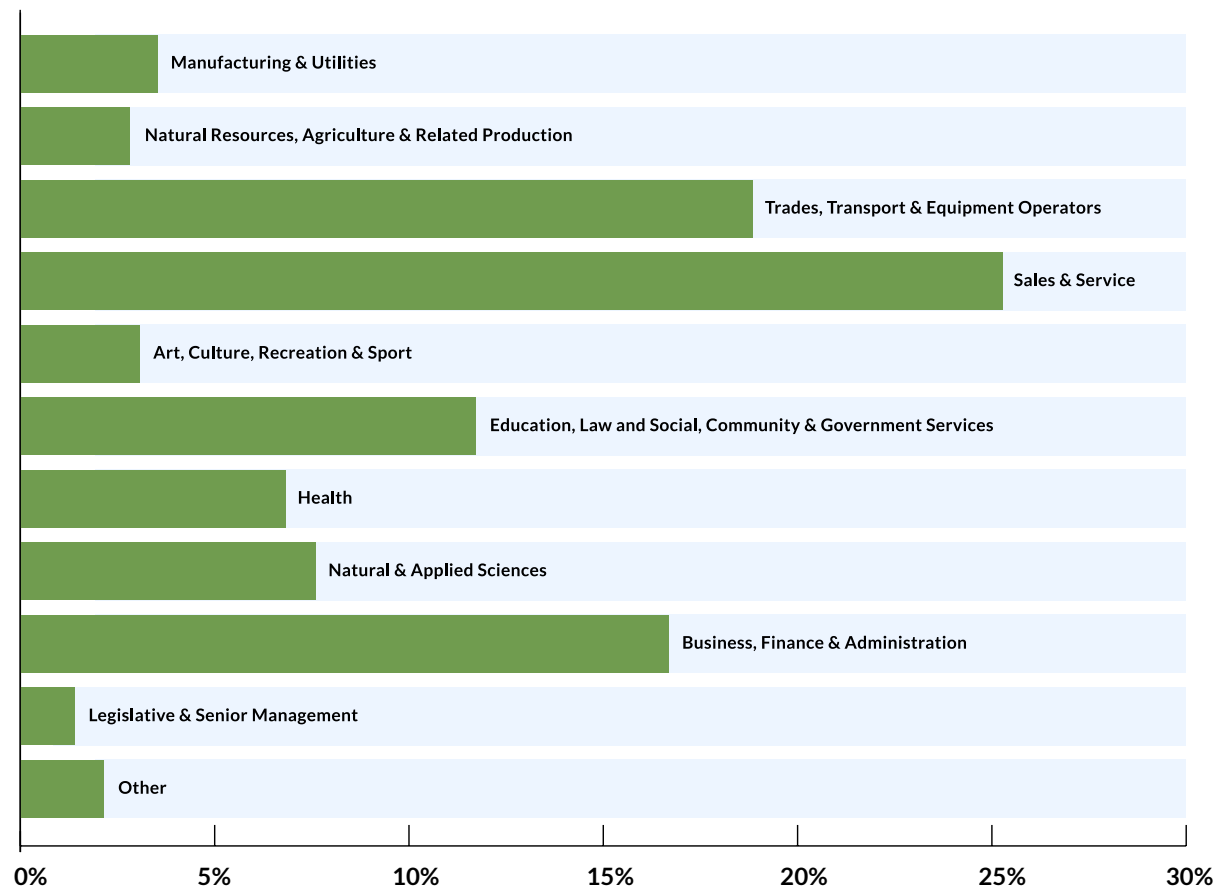


* Commuters Relative to Employed Workers

SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

Okotoks employment base is dominated by 5 major industry sectors, with sales and service occupations (25.28%) and trades, transport and equipment operators (18.86%) representing the largest shares. These are followed by business, finance and administration (16.70%), education and social services (11.72%), and natural and applied sciences (7.61%). Over the past two decades, sales and service jobs have consistently employed the greatest number of Okotokians; while education and social services has seen the most notable growth, nearly doubling its share since 2001.

Figure 7. Okotoks Labour Force by Occupation

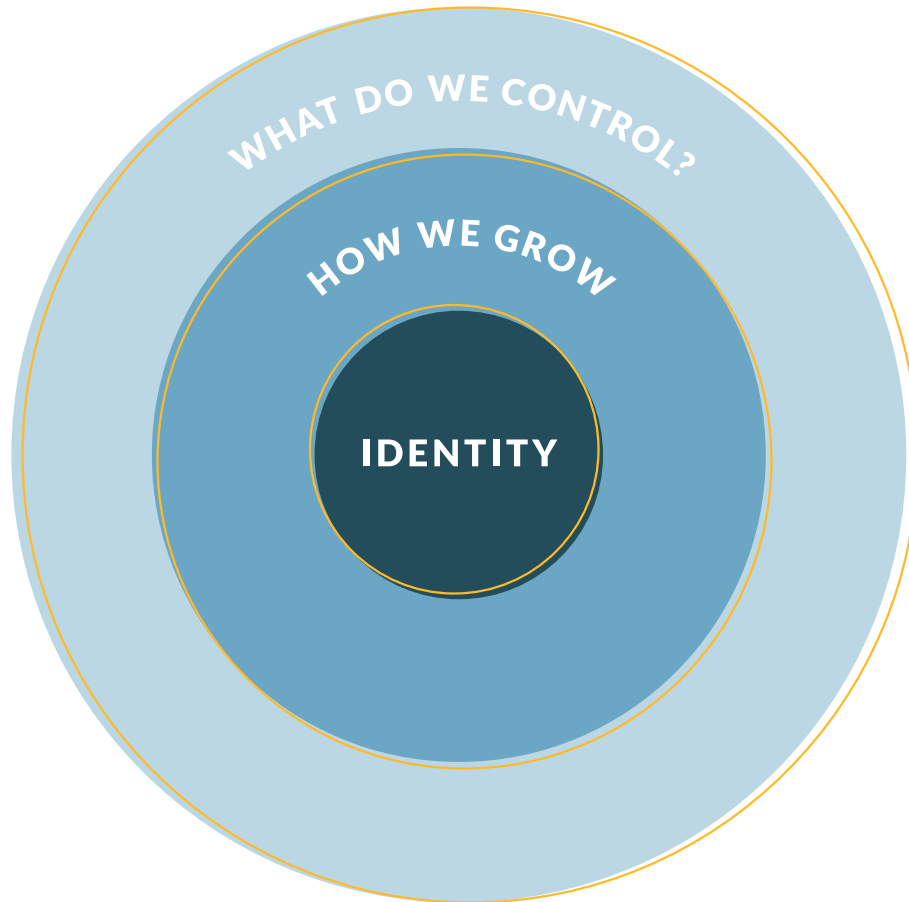


SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION 2021

2.0

Identity Driven Growth





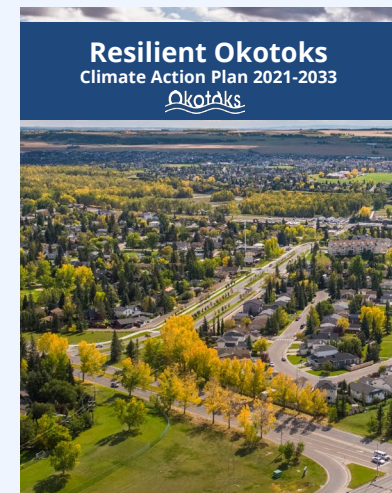
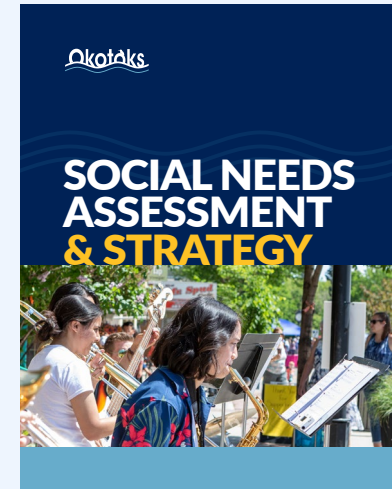
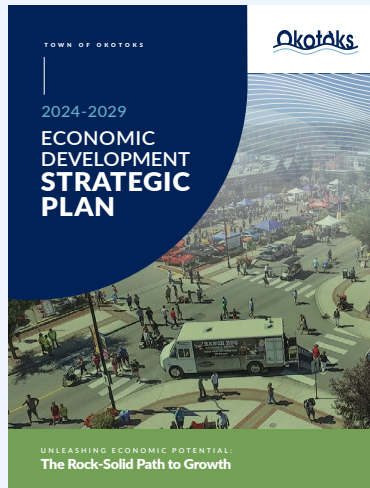
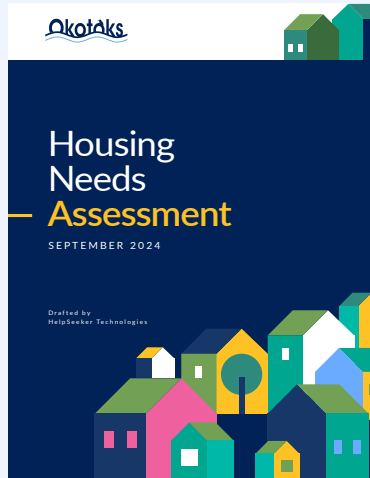
Identity Driven Growth

Identity-driven growth refers to an approach that emphasizes building upon and enhancing the unique character, values, and vision of a community as it grows. For Okotoks, this means growth needs to achieve multiple outcomes. Adopting a quadruple bottom line approach that considers Purpose, People, Planet and Profit ensures growth continues to contribute to the Town's identity.

As the community evolves, Okotoks aims to guide future growth in a way that aligns with the aspirations of its residents, ensuring that development not only accommodates population and economic shifts but also strengthens community attachment, local opportunity, and quality of life.

2. Identity Driven Growth

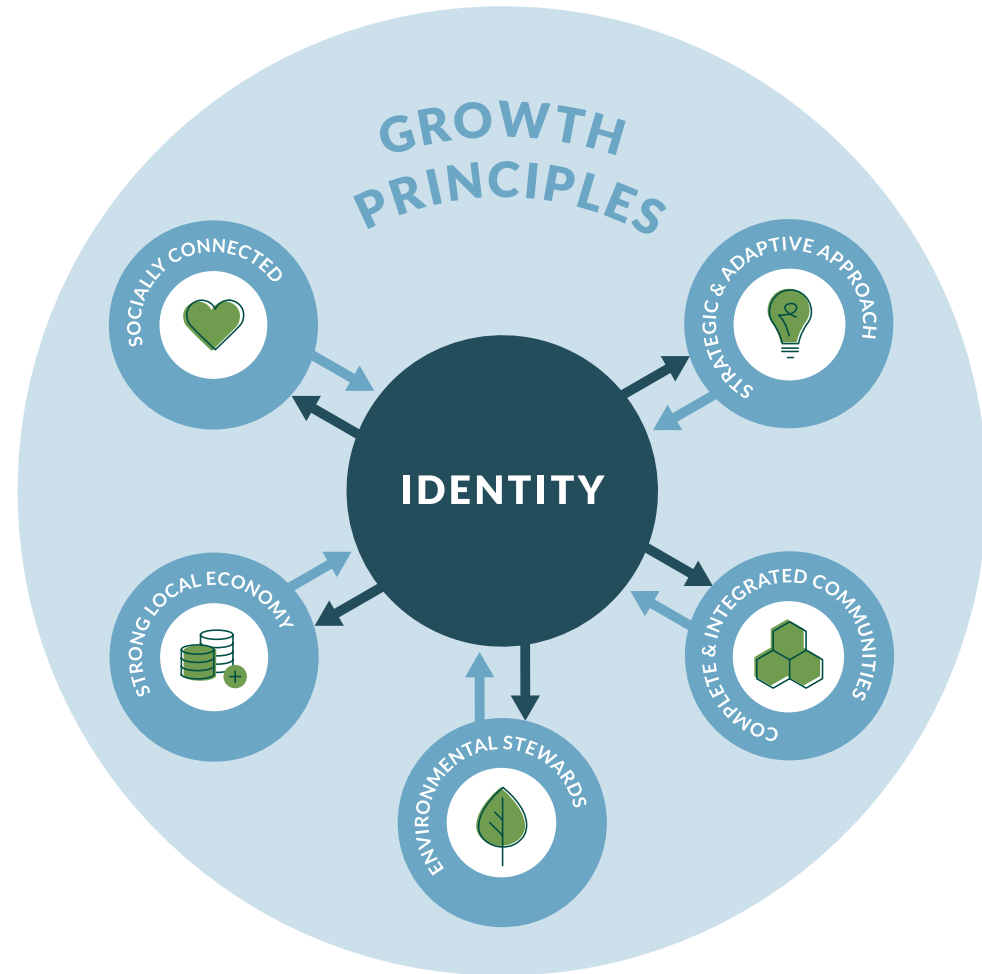
The community identity and supportive growth principles have been defined through various initiatives, strategies, and plans undertaken by the Town, including the Okotoks Strategic Plan; Social Needs Assessment; Climate Action Plan; and MDP. The growth principles support a framework for decision-making and are intended to guide actions and tools utilized by the Town to their vision. This may show up in small, incremental decisions or large fundament shifts.



Okotoks Growth Principles

Growth principles and identity work together to guide decision making that shapes a strong, connected community as the Town expands. When growth is guided by values like sustainability, inclusivity, and local character, it reinforces what makes Okotoks unique. In turn, a clear identity helps set priorities for growth, ensuring development enhances quality of life and reflects the community's shared vision. This creates a cycle where identity shapes growth, and growth strengthens identity.

Guided by our community identity and growth principles —along with their corresponding targets and success measures—the growth principles inform and shape the tools available and the decision-making for managing future growth.



AS WE GROW, WE...



Are Socially Connected

Being socially connected means having meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, and regular engagement with others. It involves communication, mutual support, and active participation in community life.



Retain & Nurture a Strong Local Economy

Okotoks is an emerging economic hub that supports business growth and job creation through strategic land use planning and collaboration. Its strong partnerships and diverse housing options help attract and retain both employers and a skilled workforce.



Are Environmental Stewards

Okotoks is an environmentally conscious community that integrates innovative solutions to reduce its impact. By conserving resources, lowering emissions, and incorporating natural assets into urban design, the Town supports long-term environmental stewardship.



Have Complete & Integrated Communities

Okotoks is a complete, well-connected community that balances housing and employment while supporting daily needs through accessible, multi-modal design. Integrated green spaces enhance recreation, livability, and overall well-being.

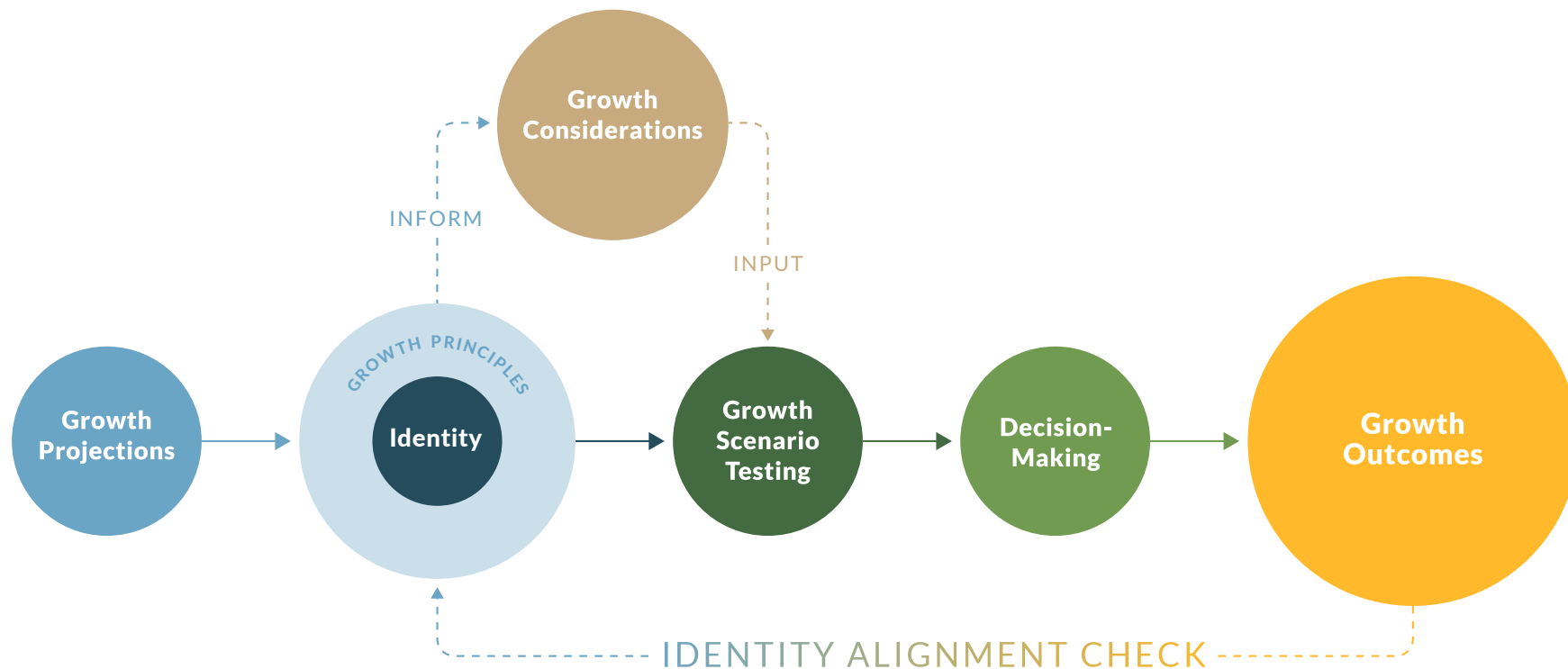


Are Strategic & Adaptive in Our Approach

Okotoks is a fiscally responsible community that aligns growth with long-term infrastructure needs and ensures new development supports established growth principles. Growth is regularly monitored, managed, and supported by a range of funding tools to achieve the Town's desired outcomes.

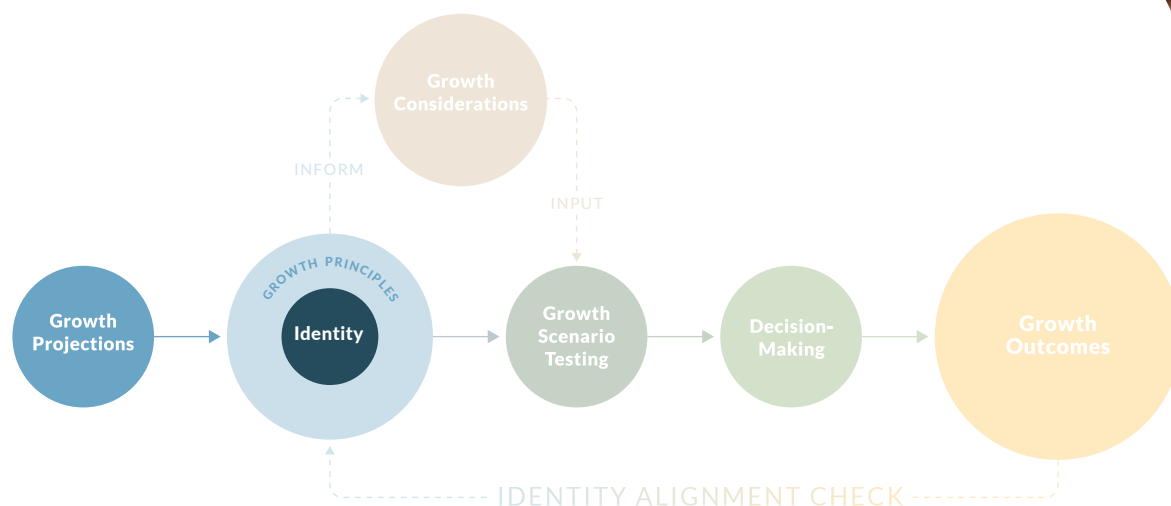
Growth Strategy Elements

There are many moving elements that inform a growth strategy, which require it to be an adaptable, living document. Given the dynamic nature of growth, these elements must undergo testing, adjustment, refinement, and be updated as the community evolves to ensure informed decision making, that considers growth impacts arising from changing economic, political and demographic circumstances, and that remains aligned with the community's vision.



3.0

Growth Projections & Land Needs



A variety of regional, economic, and demographic factors are expected to shape population, housing, and employment growth in Okotoks over the next 25 years. These factors will influence the Town's decisions regarding which types of growth to enable and where, and will also determine the types and amounts of residential and employment lands needed to support the needs of a changing population and workforce. These factors include:

Economic cycles, and Alberta's ever-changing economy and employment landscape.

Rising housing costs in major urban centres and satellite communities, including Okotoks, leading to increased migration to smaller, more affordable communities.

Immigration and interprovincial migration patterns.

Environmental limitations, particularly long-term water availability and the impacts of climate change.

A changing demographic profile, including an aging population and workforce.

Technology and innovation influences on economic development opportunities.

Okotoks' high quality of life, unique charm, social connection, and proximity to the City of Calgary.

What is Land Need?

Land need refers to the amount of land that is projected to be needed to support future residential and employment growth. The anticipated land needs of Okotoks will need to be accommodated in both existing and new neighbourhoods throughout the community.

By projecting future population and demographic trends, while considering the Town's desired financial outcomes, local job-creation goals, and current policies and regulations (such as density and residential mix), the Town can forecast how much residential and employment land is needed to accommodate desired growth. This assists the Town to strategically plan towards a preferred vision for growth that aligns with the community's identity.



Why do we model 4 growth projections?

The Town will likely undergo phases of slower and faster growth over the next 25 years. To better understand the potential impacts of different growth scenarios, and to support difficult yet informed decision-making, four population and employment projections have been modeled. These four projections will highlight the consequences of key decisions on the community's identity and long-term goals, and will allow the Town to:

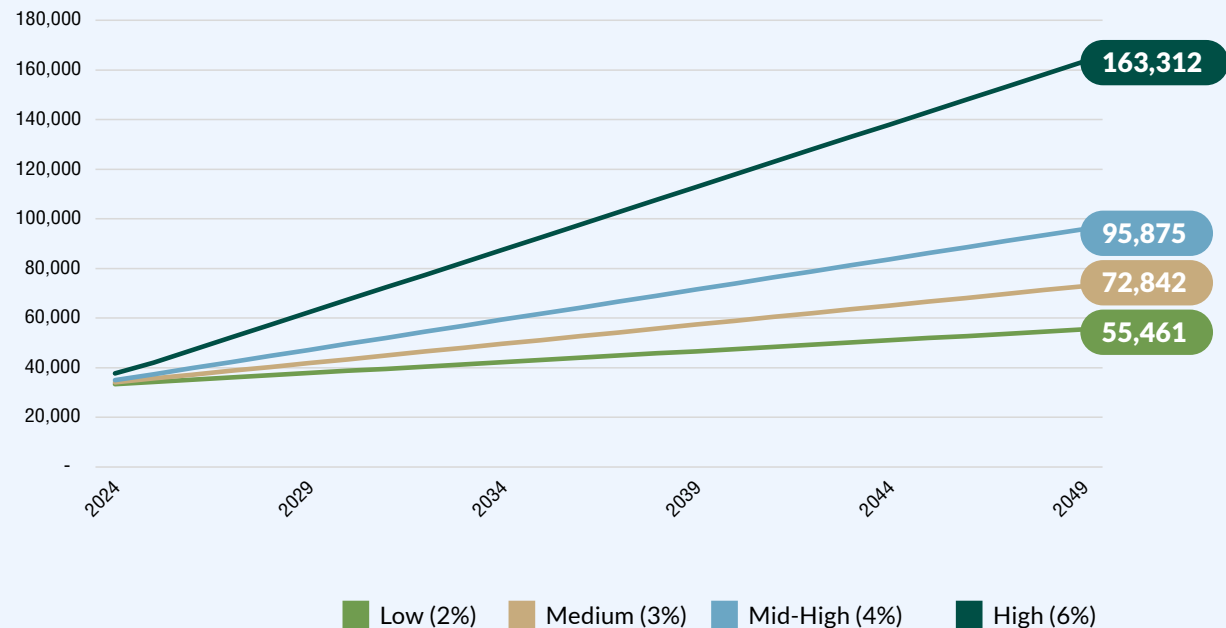
- *Plan and prepare for infrastructure upgrades and investments (e.g. water and sanitary expansion and/or upgrades) and consider funding alternatives;*
- *Establish appropriate timing to unlock new lands for development (e.g. approval of new area structure plans); and,*
- *Forecast community needs, such as new schools and emergency services.*

Population & Employment Projections

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Looking ahead, Okotoks is projected to reach 95,875 people by 2049 (Mid-High growth projection), reflecting an average annual growth of 3%. While sizable growth is expected to occur across all age ranges over the next 25 years, it is anticipated that most of the projected population growth will stem from migration into Okotoks, representing upwards of 90% of this growth. Migrants typically have a younger age profile, between 25 and 64, which will help support labour force growth and slow the rate of population aging. As a result, the demographic composition is expected to include more young families and school-aged children, shifting the proportion of the population in the 15-64 age range from 63% to 66%. This migration is likely driven by the town's regional access to diverse employment opportunities, high quality of life, strong sense of community, and access to natural amenities.

Figure 8. 25 Year Population Projections

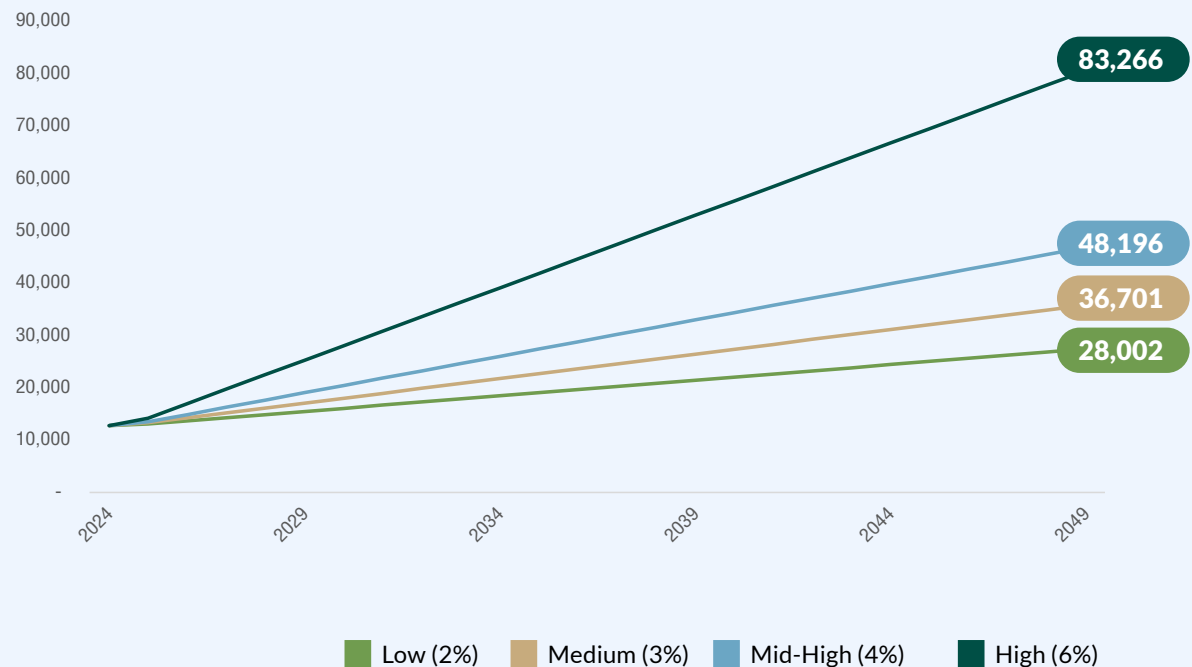


SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Employment in Okotoks is projected to grow significantly over the next 25 years, with total jobs more than doubling in all scenarios. Central to this projection model is the Town's goal of establishing a balanced tax assessment base, shifting from 88% residential and 12% non-residential to the MDP target of 80% residential and 20% non-residential. Achieving this split relies on increased non-residential development, which in turn drives job creation. As a result, projected employment is expected to gradually outpace local labour force growth. This will eventually flip Okotoks's commuter flow (See Figure 6.) from a net outflow (residents traveling outside their community for work) to a net inflow (non-Okotoks residents traveling into the community for work). For the Town to achieve this balanced tax assessment base, considerable work and focused attention will be required to attract non-residential uses to Okotoks.

Figure 9. 25 Year Employment Forecast



SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL
REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

Residential Land Need

Total residential land need is driven by projected population growth. Understanding the projected population growth and demographics informs what housing units will be demanded in the future. The land area required is then determined by understanding the total footprint of housing, which is guided by housing density assumptions, and associated uses needed to service growth (i.e., roads, parks, stormwater ponds, etc.). Ultimately, this provides land need projections that the Town can utilize to support future growth.

Figure 10. Projected Residential Gross Developed Lands*

	2025-2049 (ha)	Annual Average (ha)
LOW (2%)	142	6
MID (3%)	476	19
MID-HIGH (4%)	754	30
HIGH (6%)	958	38

*Note, given the complexity for the demand for housing (population to household formation to demand for dwelling units) in combination with the available supply of housing, the total and annual average land needs do not increase in a linear fashion.





HOUSING DEMAND

Housing demand is established by estimating the quantity and type of housing needed to support the projected future population. Since growth is happening across the board in all age ranges, the increase in housing demand for a variety of dwelling types will likely reflect this. Smaller homes to support seniors aging in place, and single detached homes to support growing families will be in higher demand in 2049 than they are today. Shifting macroeconomic trends around work, which may include industry shocks (disruptions, major shifts in demand, etc.) choices regarding work-life balance, and expectations for the future will require a greater variety of forms of housing to accommodate these changes.

HOUSING DENSITY

Housing density is determined by assigning a reasonable density (units per hectare) to each housing type. This is based on MDP policy, Area Structure and Neighbourhood Area Structure plan design, and densities observed within the mature community. It additionally considers the difference between new communities and mature/developing communities in their ability and appropriateness to accommodate density.

Figure 11. Housing Unit Demand Projections to 2049

2024	Projected New Housing Units to 2049			
 Single Detached: 8,706	LOW 4,373	MEDIUM 7,226	MID-HIGH 10,814	HIGH 22,426
 Semi-Detached & Row Houses 1,600 Apartments 1,041 Moveable 38 Multi-Residential: 2,679*	1,447 1,576 3,023	2,313 2,561 4,874	3,616 3,902 7,518	7,316 7,683 14,999
11,385	7,396	12,100	18,332	37,425

*From a tracking perspective, the Town considers all non-single detached housing (i.e., semi-detached, row housing, and apartments) as multi-residential units.

SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

Employment Land Need

Understanding employment land need begins with projecting job growth across various industries. These projections are then translated into space requirements based on the types of buildings and site typically associated with each industry. Similarly, the space requirements are converted to employment land need using industry-specific floor area ratios (FARs). The resulting need gives the Town a sense of how much employment land will be needed, where, and when, ensuring there’s enough space to support a growing economy.

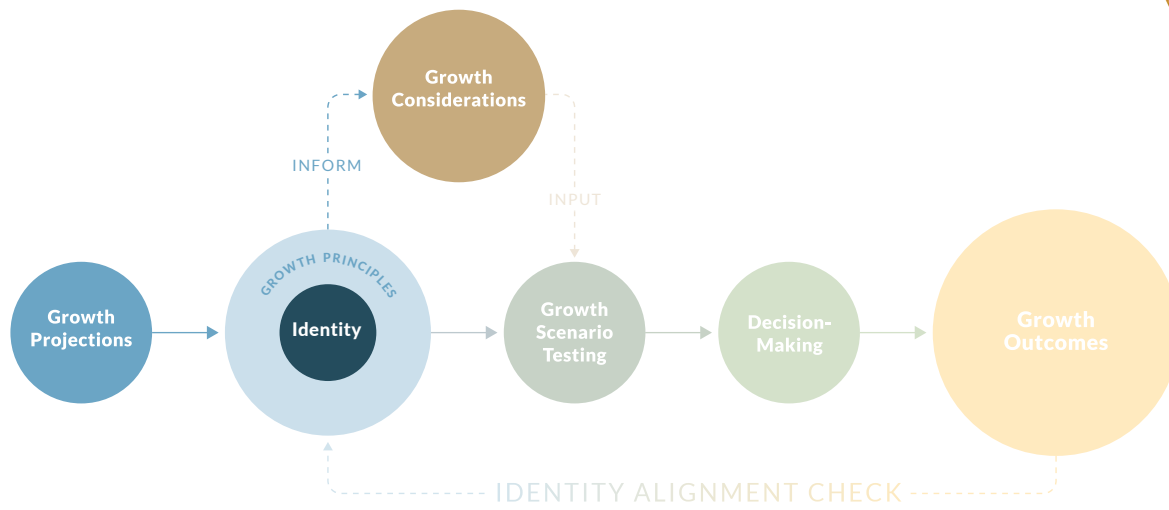
Figure 12. Projected Employment Gross Developed Lands

	2025-2049 (ha)	Annual Average (ha)
LOW (2%)	90	4
MID (3%)	239	10
MID-HIGH (4%)	366	15
HIGH (6%)	458	18



4.0

Growth Considerations



Growth is dynamic and requires careful planning and consideration of multiple factors. Key elements include the anticipated speed of growth, the availability and suitability of land to accommodate future growth, the sequencing of new neighbourhoods, the necessary investments from both the Town and industry to support expansion and long-term operating costs. Through the Growth Strategy, the Town has contemplated each of these different elements.

Growth Considerations

- *Environmental Stewardship and Land Supply - how much land is available and suitable to accommodate growth?*
- *Capital and Operational Investments - how will growth have an impact on the Town's capital and operational investments, and level of service (and vice versa)?*
- *Neighbourhood Development Sequence - where will the Town grow next?*
- *Rate of Growth - how does the speed at which we grow impact who we are, and what are the financial outcomes?*

Land Supply

To understand how the Town of Okotoks can accommodate future growth, it is essential to quantify and evaluate the current land supply that could potentially support growth, its readiness for development (i.e. has local area policy in place), and the types of development it could feasibly support (i.e. residential, employment, and institutional).

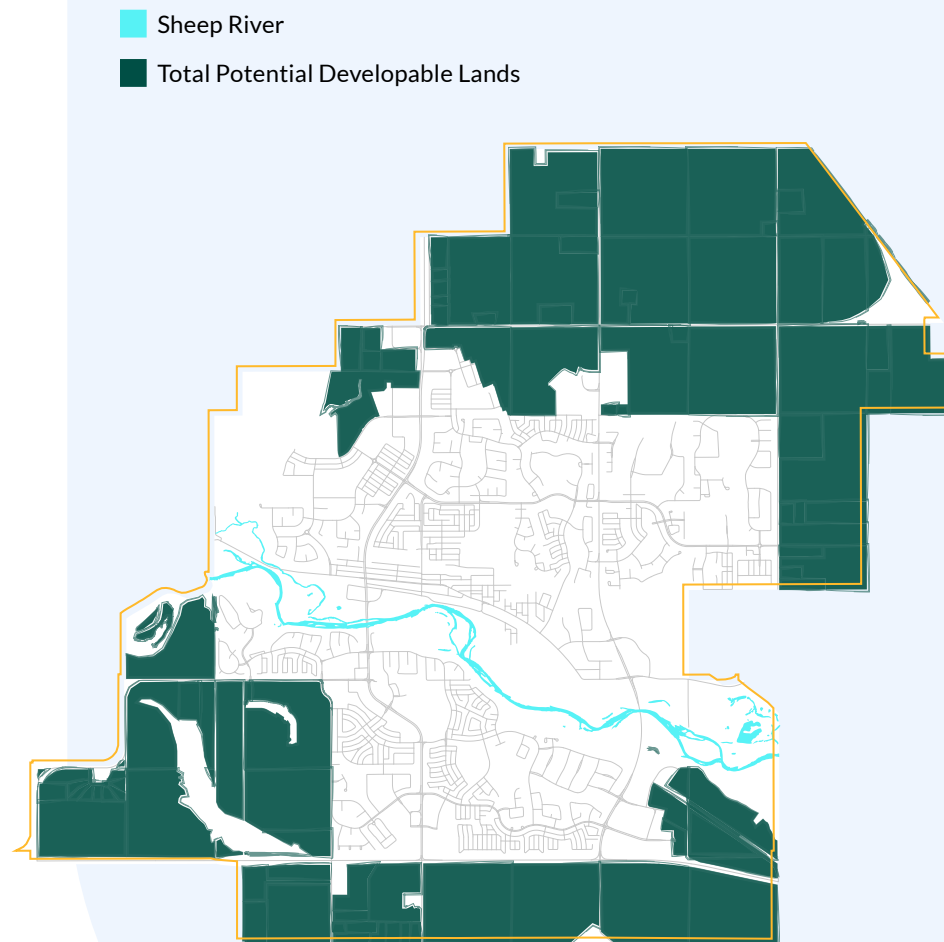
ESTABLISHING LAND SUPPLY

To establish the existing land supply the Town reviewed all approved area structure plans (ASPs) for guidance on developable lands within those areas. Lands are considered developable if they are suitable for future development (i.e., free from major environmental, natural and/or physical constraints). Lands that are unplanned (do not have ASPs in place) were assessed at a desktop level and natural constraints, such as flood hazards and steep slopes (15%+), and physical constraints, including major pipelines, transmission corridors, and future interchanges, were considered and removed to establish the potential developable area. Based on this assessment, the Town's assumed potential developable land area in unplanned lands, prior to consideration of **environmentally sensitive and/or significant areas**, is approximately 1,787 hectares.

Sheep River Flood Hazard Area

The Province updated and published revised flood hazard mapping in May 2025. The updated flood extents have been accounted for in the mapping, and calculation of total potential developable lands. The new floodway and flood fringe now extends into an area identified as a Special Policy Area within the West Okotoks Area Structure Plan. The Special Policy Area requires further planning policy be established prior to proceeding to next steps in the development process.

Figure 13. Total Potential Developable Lands



SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

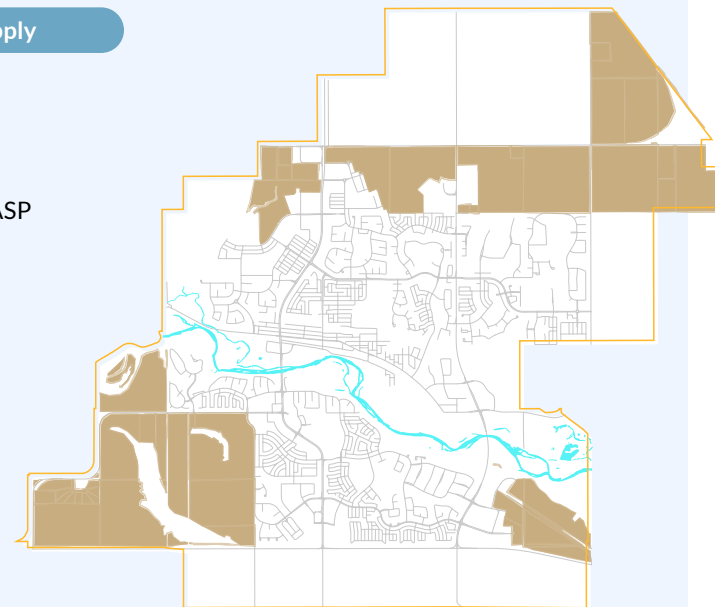
PLANNED AND UNPLANNED LAND

Understanding the supply of planned (i.e. has an area structure plan in place) and unplanned land allows the Town to be **Strategic and Adaptive** when assessing its readiness to meet growth demands in the short, medium, and long-term, and to ensure sufficient land supply to satisfy balanced tax assessment base objectives. Planned lands are more development ready, as they include guidance on land use, density, infrastructure needs, and direction and policy on environmentally sensitive lands (e.g. designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas). In contrast, unplanned lands require substantial planning work before development can occur, making them a longer-term option for accommodating growth.

About half of the Town's available lands are currently planned (890 hectares). Of these lands 53% (471 hectares) are planned to accommodate residential growth and 47% (411 hectares) are planned to accommodate non-residential growth.

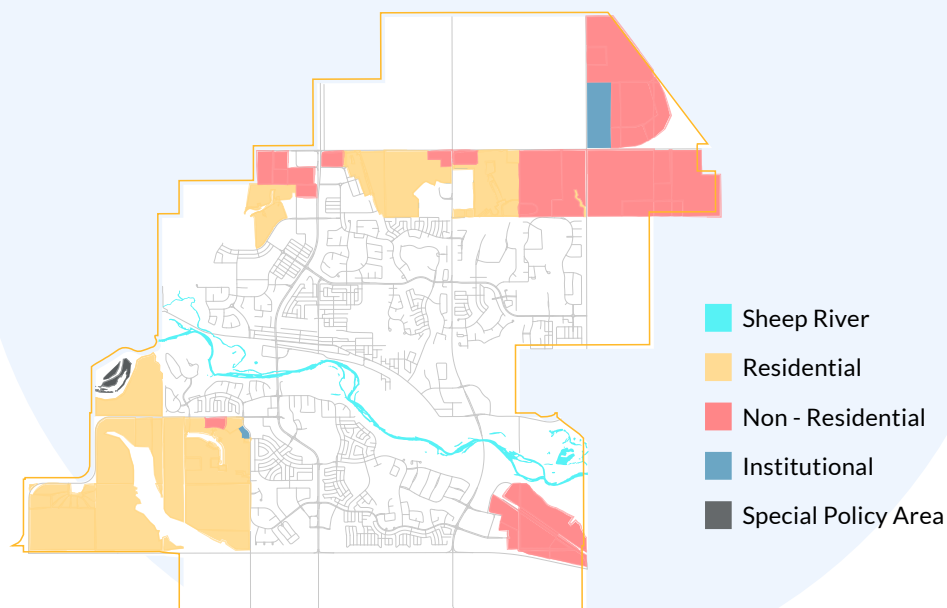
Figure 14. Planned Land Supply

- Sheep River
- Planned Land - Adopted ASP



SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

Figure 15. Planned Land by Proposed Land Use



SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

Prior to advancing area structure planning, it is important for The Town to explore how to leverage unplanned lands to accommodate future community growth and needs. To nurture a **Strong Local Economy**, the Town will need to maintain a supply of land that is suitable for residential and non-residential development as it attracts more businesses to Okotoks. By assessing the unplanned lands, the Town can identify where these future land uses could be accommodated, as well as the location and extent of environmentally sensitive and/or significant lands that should be protected through policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

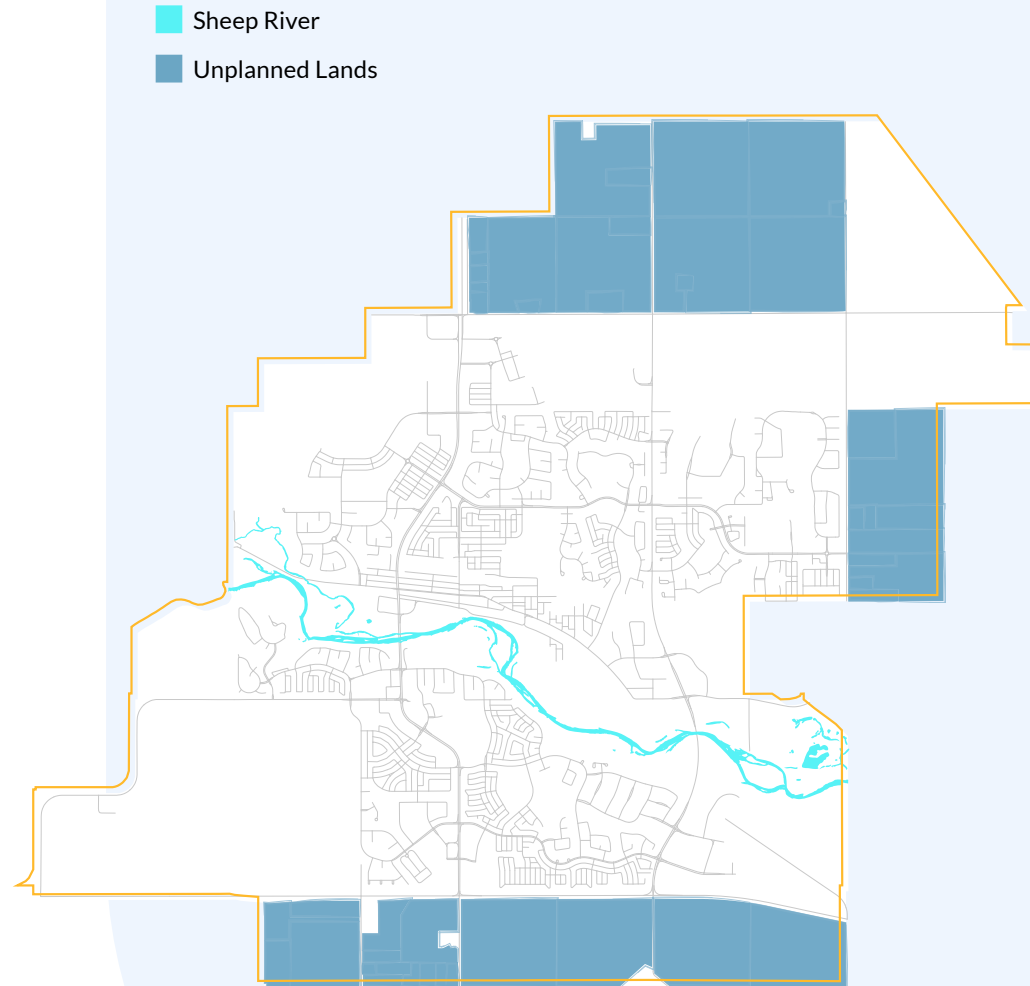


Use land supply targets as established in the Municipal Development Plan for planned land supply and serviced land supply.



Monitor land supply annually to inform decisions around approving new areas for development (i.e., area structure plans).

Figure 16. Unplanned Lands



SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

Environmental Stewardship

As the Town of Okotoks continues to experience growth, demonstrated environmental leadership remains a top priority. This term is used to reflect the Town's work towards achieving MDP, Environmental Master Plan (EMP), and Climate Action Plan targets for climate change resilience, greenhouse gas emissions, water conservation, energy efficiency, and land and ecological biodiversity. Thus, it plays a crucial role in shaping the Town's Growth Strategy and may directly impact the Town's land supply.

There are many high-value natural assets across Okotoks that do not currently have ASPs in place (i.e., unplanned land). As there is no existing policy in place, natural assets, including the Town's Defensive Areas, are not accounted for in the calculation of the Total Potential Developable Land.

What actions is the Town taking to safeguard natural assets?

In 2020, the Town developed a Natural Assets Inventory which assessed the number, extent, condition, and estimated value of Okotoks' natural and semi-natural assets. This study represented the first example of a natural asset mapping and ecosystem service valuation exercise that has been undertaken by a municipality in Alberta, underscoring Okotoks as a leader in environmental sustainability. The Inventory allows the Town to better understand how land use management and policy decisions may positively or negatively impact the Town's natural assets.

What are Defensive Areas?

Defensive Areas are defined in the Okotoks MDP as areas identified as having potential ecological significance or development constraints that require further study prior to any development.

These areas include wetlands, waterbodies, tree stands, and some high-value pasture lands which may require mitigation for development to occur, and in some cases may not be developable.

What are Natural Assets?

The Town has identified, in addition to environmentally significant areas, an inventory of natural, semi-natural, and naturalized assets-such as wetlands and mature tree stands-that provide vital benefits to the local ecosystem. Protecting these natural assets adds significant value by supporting climate resilience, biodiversity, and the community's overall health and sustainability

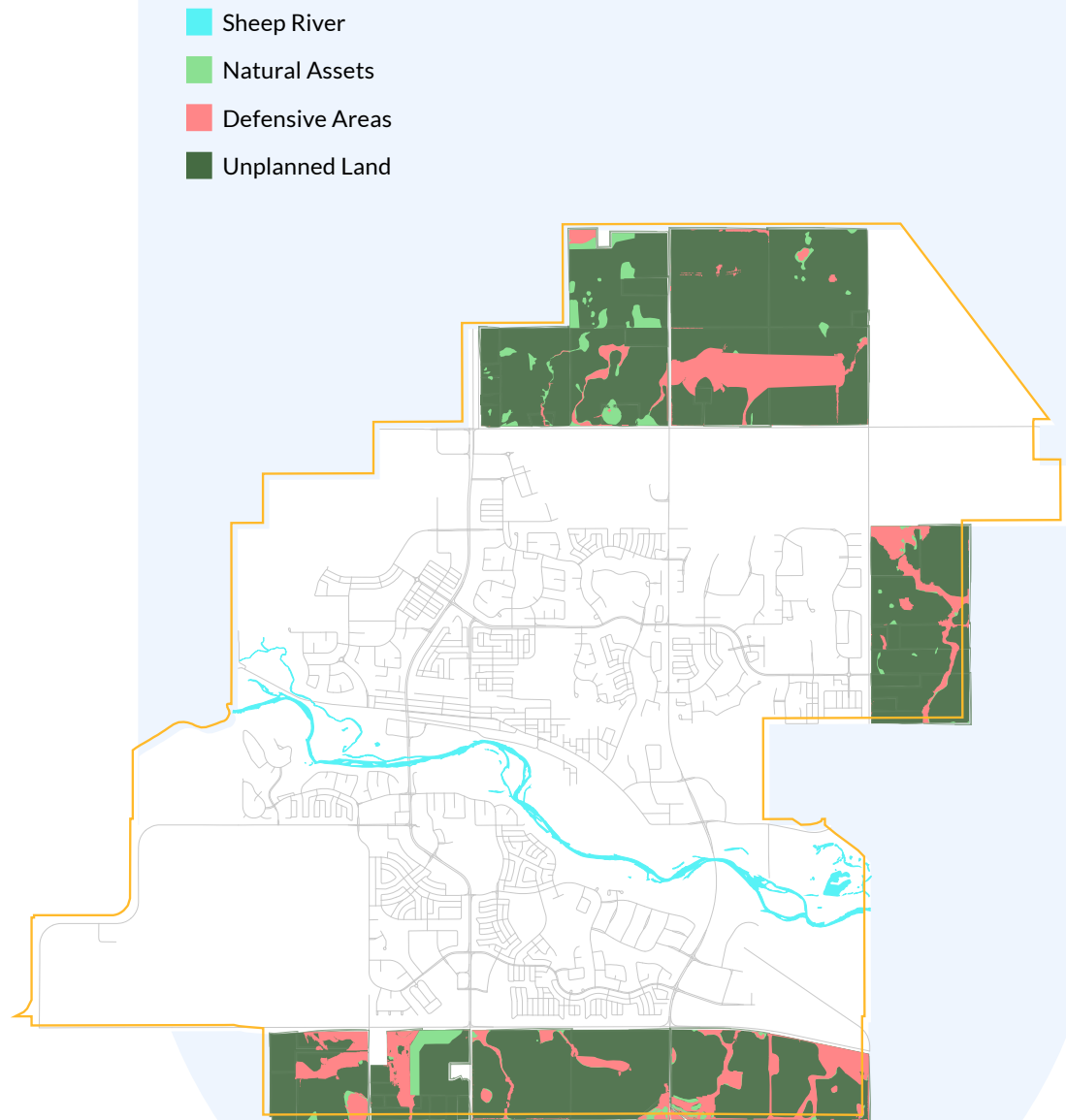
Building off the inventory, the Town is developing policies as **Environmental Stewards** to protect high-value natural assets across Okotoks as it continues to grow. It is important for the Town to identify and protect (e.g. through policy) these environmentally sensitive and/or significant areas prior to local level planning and development being able to proceed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Complete broader, regional studies and policy development prior to new area structure plans being approved to enable proactive environmental stewardship.

Figure 17. Natural Assets and Defensive Areas



SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

Capital & Operating Costs

As our community grows, so does the need for new infrastructure and services including firehalls, policing, community centres, roads, parks - and utilities we cannot see, but still depend on, such as water and sewer. These come with upfront capital costs as well as ongoing costs for operation, maintenance, meeting service standards, and eventual replacement. Growth isn't just about building new homes—it's about building **Complete and Integrated Communities**. This entails maintaining a level of service for the key community spaces, such as cultural and heritage facilities, parks, pathways, and playgrounds, or recreational facilities, which help us stay **Socially Connected** and play a significant role in developing the sense of community which is integral to the Town's identity. To do this responsibly, the Town must ensure that any new development is supported by thoughtful, long-term financial planning.

Before approving or opening new areas for development, it's important that the Town understand all the costs involved with growth. This includes:

- The initial investment to build new infrastructure,
- The ongoing costs to operate and maintain it, and
- The future costs to replace it when it reaches the end of its life.
- How investments and operating/maintenance/ LCC costs will be funded.

Considering these costs is essential to understanding both the micro impact (how a single development affects Town resources) and the macro impact (how that growth fits into the bigger picture of Town-wide service delivery and financial sustainability). Well-informed decision-making which considers the full financial implications of community growth, including all lifecycle costs, keeps the Town **Strategic and Adaptive** as it grows. By aligning growth with available funding and long-term plans, the Town can continue to grow in a way that is financially sustainable and benefits both current and future residents.

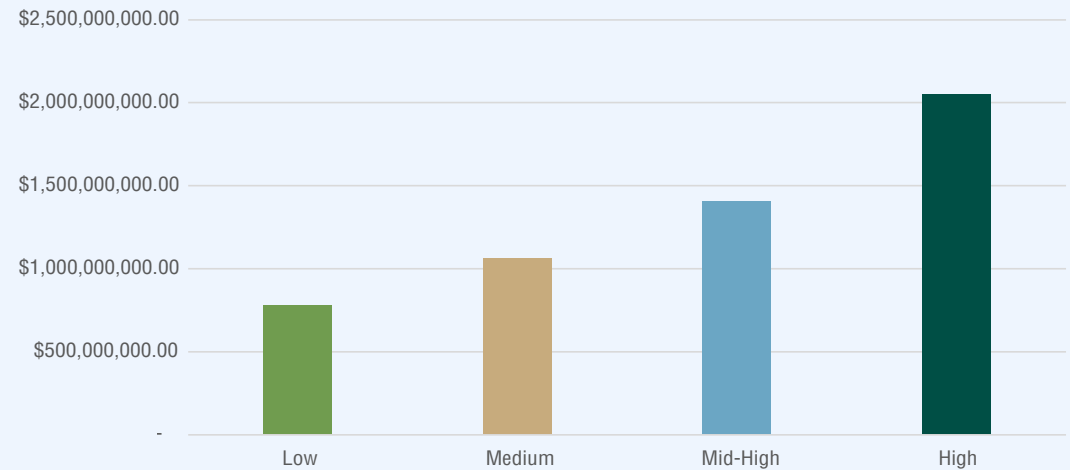


CAPITAL COSTS

Funding capital infrastructure costs is a joint responsibility shared between the Town and developers. Developers contribute as they develop, to major, off-site infrastructure and on-site servicing, while the Town may invest in broader infrastructure that benefits the entire community such as community facilities. A varying growth rate will impact the amount of capital expenditures necessary to support growth. This is reflective of the infrastructure required to be built to facilitate growth and also additional infrastructure for the Town to operate and maintain over the long-term, including life-cycle replacement.

Smart infrastructure investments and well-serviced, shovel-ready lands reduce uncertainty and bolster the Town's competitiveness, which help it retain and nurture a **Strong Local Economy**. These investments represent a shared financial risk and responsibility since both public and private sectors depend on timely and coordinated infrastructure to support development. It is crucial for the Town to carefully assess where and when to invest to ensure public funds are allocated to areas with clear financial returns or strategic advantages. This form of capital planning ensures investments are made in priority areas that align with the Town's long-term objectives. Leveraging and optimizing existing infrastructure can promote compact urban forms, and align with the Town's Environmental Stewardship.

Figure 18. Total Capital Expenditures 2024 - 2049 By Growth Scenario



SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT,
APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

CAPITAL COSTS

The municipal debt limit is a provincially set cap on the amount of debt a municipality can take on as a proportion of its annual revenue, intended to ensure municipalities do not incur more debt than they can reasonably repay. Under each growth scenario, the proportion of the Town's debt relative to its allowable borrowing changes significantly over the 25-year term. That said, the Growth Scenarios present different outlooks for borrowing. Low growth presents a situation where the Town may be required to borrow heavily, nearing provincial limits, and could become financially unsustainable unless offset by external funding or increased revenues. Each successive growth scenario shows the Town reducing its incurred debt as a proportion to municipal and provincial limits, indicating less pressure to borrow excessively when there are larger developer contributions over time. These trends suggest that greater growth, especially when supported by a stronger non-residential tax base, can enhance fiscal capacity and reduce long-term reliance on borrowing.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Determine what capital infrastructure aligns with the Town's long-term objectives and requires the Town's support and/or can be advanced by others.



Require new proposed growth areas include policy that requires phasing and sequencing that aligns with the Town's infrastructure staging.

DEBT LIMIT

This chart illustrates how much of the Town of Okotoks' debt capacity is projected to be used over the next 25 years under four different growth scenarios.

LOW SCENARIO

Approaches 100% (provincial debt limit) around 2030–2032. This suggests significant borrowing pressure and may be financially unsustainable unless offset by increased revenues or external funding.

MEDIUM SCENARIO

Peaks around 80–85% of the Town's debt limit in the early 2030s. Briefly exceeds the Town's self-imposed debt limit but remains under the provincial debt limit.

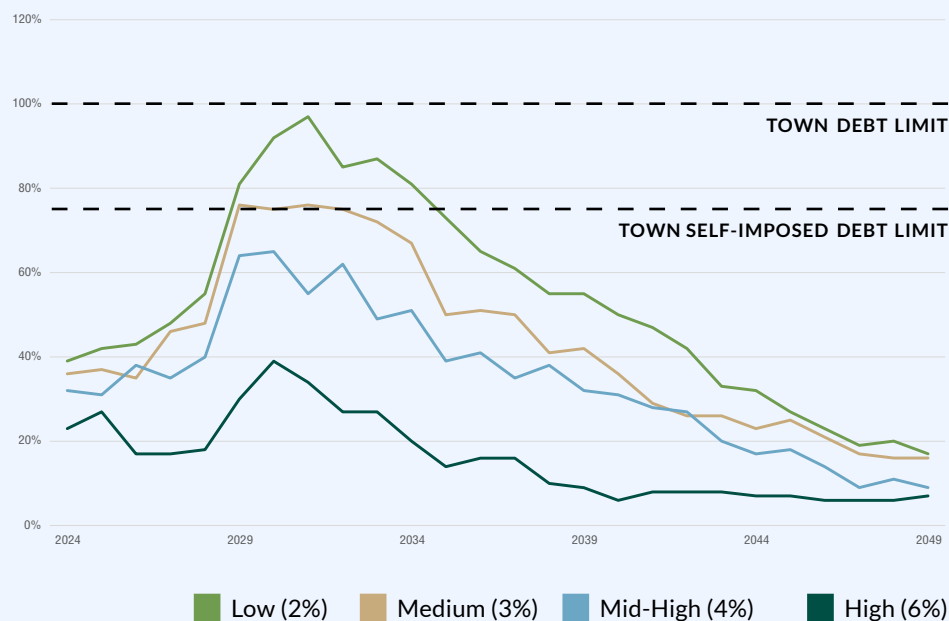
MID-HIGH SCENARIO

Peaks below the Town's self-imposed debt limit (~70%) around 2030. Declines steadily after mid-2030s.

HIGH SCENARIO

Remains well below both the Town's debt limit and the Town's self-imposed debt limit for the entire forecast period. Peaks near 40% in early 2030s, then drops rapidly.

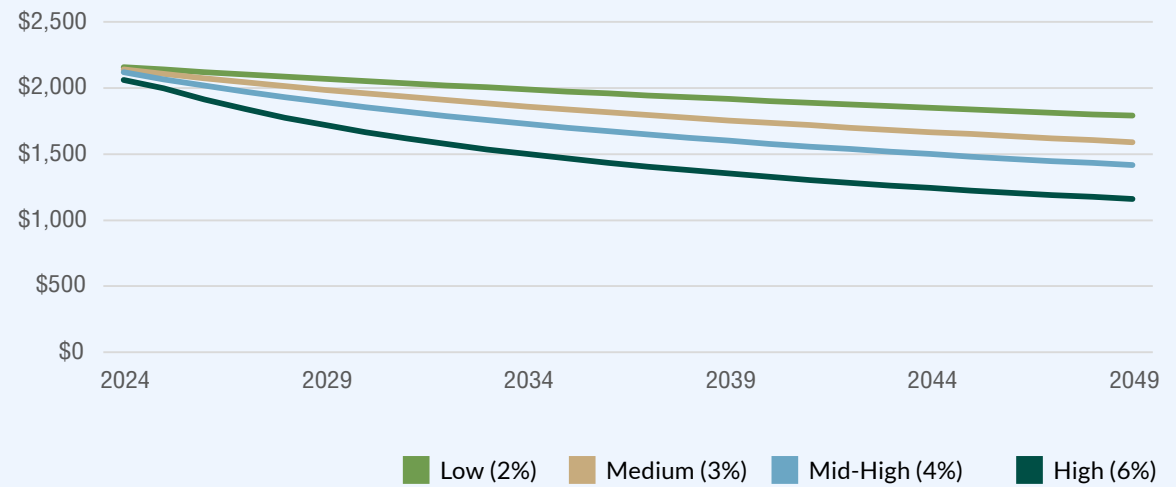
Figure 19. Debt Limit Used 2024–2049



OPERATING COSTS

Operating expenditures refer to the annual costs associated with delivering municipal services, which are supported by a variety of revenues, such as Okotoks property taxes, user fees, and operating grants from higher levels of government. Careful attention to the Town's desired levels of service and their associated operating costs is crucial to ensuring that Okotoks remains financially sustainable, Strategic and Adaptive in supporting both new and maturing communities as it grows. Over the course of the 25 year-horizon, the Town is expected to experience increases to its operating costs, reflecting the increased use of municipal services from additional residents. That said, the Town's per capita operating costs are anticipated to remain fairly flat and/or decline slightly over time. This reflects the Town's ability to capture economies of scale with regard to its service delivery. As the population increases, fixed operating costs, be it core municipal staff salaries, facility operations, or contracted services and utilities, are spread over a broader service base, thereby maintaining and/or lowering the cost per resident.

Figure 20. Projected Operating Costs Per Capita



SOURCE: GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

OPERATING COSTS

As our community grows, upfront investments in infrastructure are required, while the resulting tax revenue is realized gradually over time. This means that the long-term operating and infrastructure replacement costs can outpace the incremental revenue generated by new development. To ensure we continue providing high-quality services and a strong foundation for all residents, municipal tax rates are expected to increase thoughtfully alongside all rates of growth.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

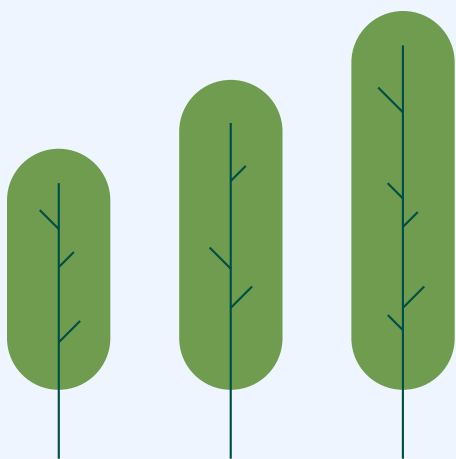


Evaluate the operational impact of new proposed growth areas and the cumulative impact to the Town as a whole.



Rate of Growth

The rate of growth refers to the speed at which a population changes year over year. Managing the rate of growth shapes how well Okotoks can adapt, invest, thrive, and maintain its unique identity. While growth offers opportunities for a community, its pace can have significant implications for a Town's social, organizational, and financial sustainability. Managing growth at a steady, balanced pace helps ensure the Town can maintain high-quality services, manage and mitigate potential financial risks, and plan responsibly for the future. Given Okotoks history of rapid growth and more recently slowed growth, the Town has experience of the implications observed from both ends of the growth rate spectrum.



IMPLICATIONS OF RAPID GROWTH

Growing too quickly can...

- strain a community's organizational resources
- shift the organizational focus from long-term strategic planning to short-term, reactive decision-making, making it difficult to guide growth in a way that aligns with the Town's identity
- dilute community social connectedness and increase urban anonymity
- financially outpace the Town's ability to fund and deliver infrastructure and services (e.g., schools, community services, parks, etc.) and put pressure on budgets and/or deferred priorities.

IMPLICATIONS OF SLOW GROWTH

Growth that is too slow can...

- limit the diversity of housing options and community amenities within the Town
- hinder the Town's ability to repay infrastructure costs advanced to support growth and overall community needs
- limit annual assessments that can contribute to ongoing operating costs for services delivered by the Town

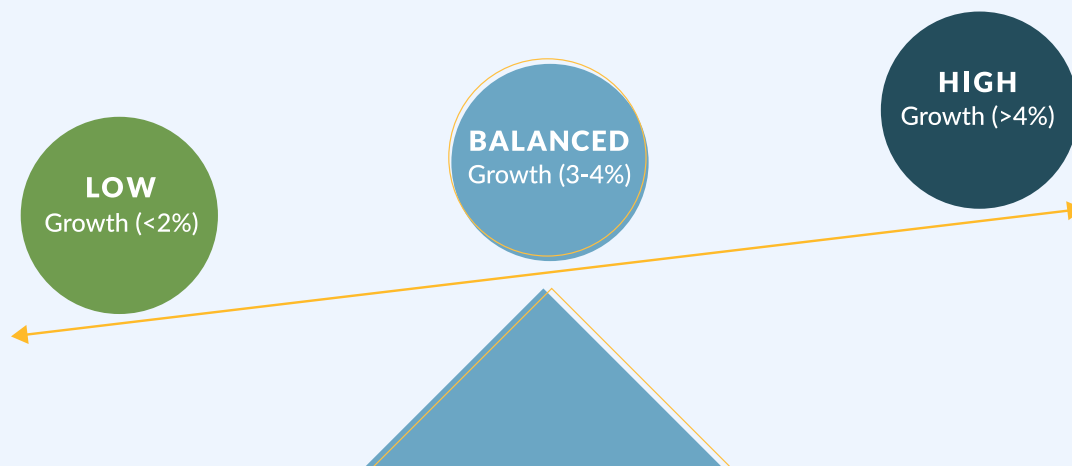
BALANCED GROWTH IN OKOTOKS

A balanced growth rate enables a community to grow with purpose—so that development is not just about adding people, but about building a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable community for everyone. This pace ensures there is time to develop a variety of housing options to meet diverse needs, the key social infrastructure to support growth, and to ensure community engagement exists – the hallmarks of a **Complete and Integrated Community**. Additionally, balanced growth allows the Town to act **Strategically and Adaptively**, adjusting plans and policies as conditions change, such as shifting demographics

and market trends, without being overwhelmed by rapid, unplanned growth. For Okotoks, growing within the range of 3 - 4% allows us to:

- Plan proactively
- Effectively maintain high levels of service for all residents
- Consider, coordinate and manage long-range infrastructure and financial needs

Figure 21. Balancing the Rate of Growth



GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Manage costs and capital investments through policies which require infrastructure phasing match/reflect growth patterns and projections.



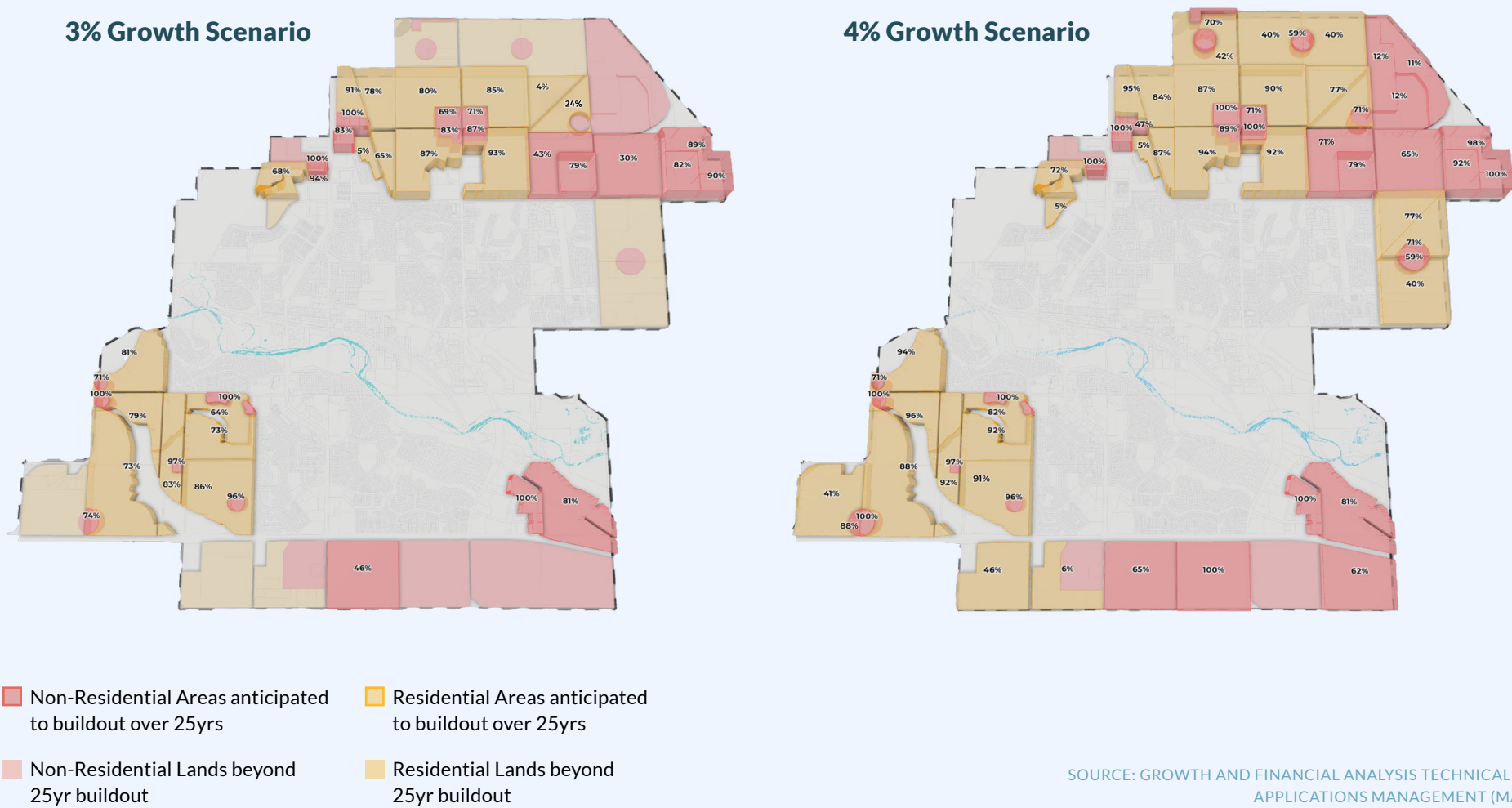
Steward growth by leveraging strategic infrastructure planning to influence where, and at what rate, development occurs.



Ensure community amenities and programs keep pace with growth.

Over time, the Town can use the target growth rate of 3-4% to monitor how growth may need to be adjusted (using other tools) to ensure growth occurs sustainably.

Figure 22. Visualization of Community Build-out



Neighbourhood Development Sequence

Growth sequencing is a strategic planning approach that guides the orderly development of current undeveloped land. The growth sequence is informed by the Town's long-term vision, in-depth infrastructure and financial impact analysis (refer to the Appendix for support reports).



Contiguous Growth

Develop land adjacent to existing areas to prevent scattered development, ensuring efficient infrastructure use and avoiding patchwork servicing. This supports the creation of **Complete and Integrated Communities** by ensuring neighbourhoods grow logically and cohesively. Additionally, being strategic around how many development “fronts” are underway can allow for more effective and efficient utilization of infrastructure and investments.

Infrastructure Optimization

Utilize existing infrastructure capacity —like roads, pipes, and treatment facilities—to accommodate growth, and prioritize areas where infrastructure can be shared across multiple parcels or development phases to reduce costs. Coordinating and aligning this investment with the private sector indicates where the Town supports growth, reducing risk and nurturing a **Strong Local Economy**.

Policy Alignment

Ensure growth reflects long-term municipal plans and policies (e.g., Municipal Development Plan, area structure plans).

Strategic Priorities

While the neighbourhood development sequence plan encourages orderly, contiguous development, non-contiguous growth may be appropriate when it supports key strategic priorities—such as creating employment lands or addressing urgent housing needs. Flexibility in these cases allows the Town to be **Strategic and Adaptive** as it responds to evolving opportunities, provided potential impacts like higher infrastructure costs or service inefficiencies are carefully considered to maintain sustainable, balanced growth.

The Growth Sequence Map shows the preferred neighbourhood development sequence for undeveloped lands in Okotoks. The Phase Horizons indicate the likely order of development, with each phase following the substantial completion of the previous one. Detailed information related to future infrastructure needs to support growth areas can be found in the Appendix (Servicing Strategy Brief, ISL, 2025). The development sequence also allows for strategic growth opportunities, such as employment lands, that align with the Town's long-term aspirations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Support contiguous community growth by ensuring future ASP boundaries reflect the ability to plan, design, and progress infrastructure over landownership boundaries.

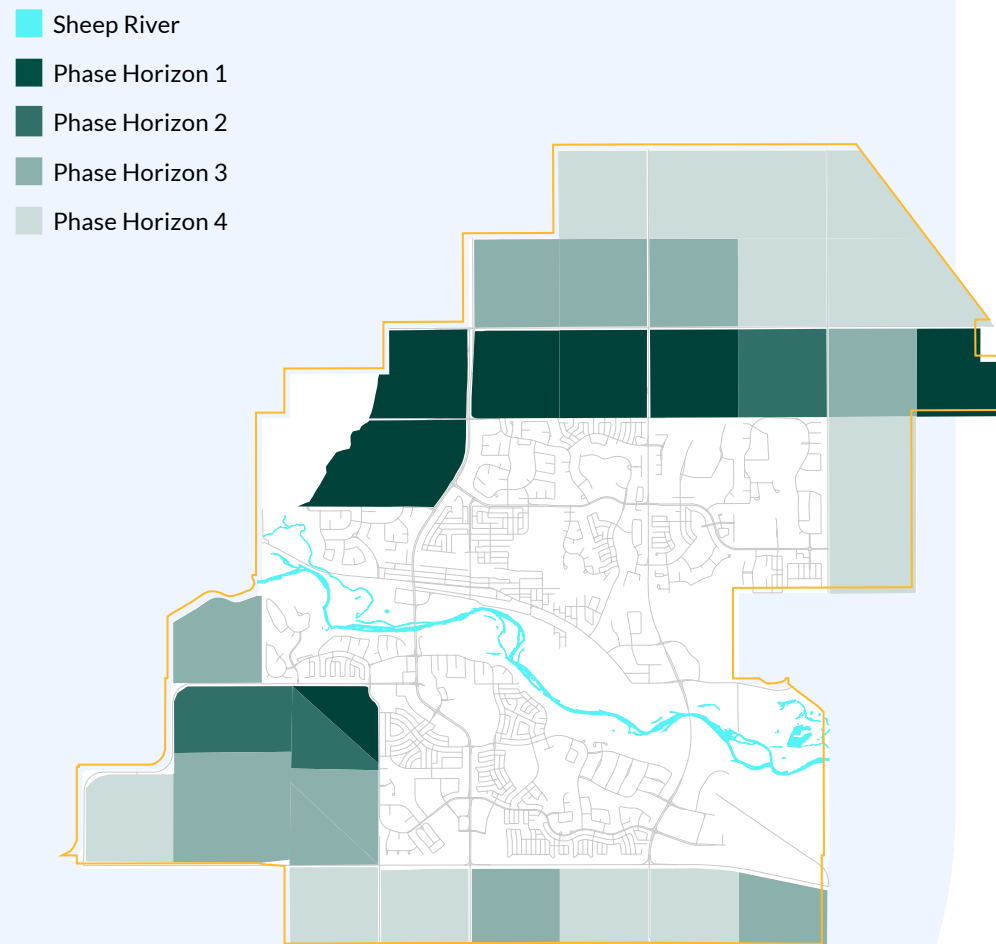


Regularly review and update the Town's servicing strategy and master plans to reflect policy changes and include necessary contextual information to guide detailed infrastructure design.



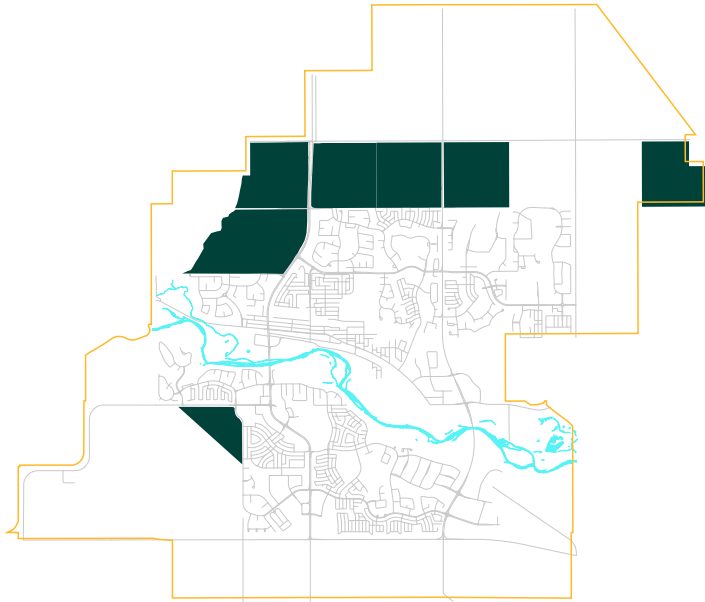
Regularly review the Town's Offsite Levy Bylaw to include projected budget amendments based on growth requirements.

Figure 23. Growth Sequencing Map



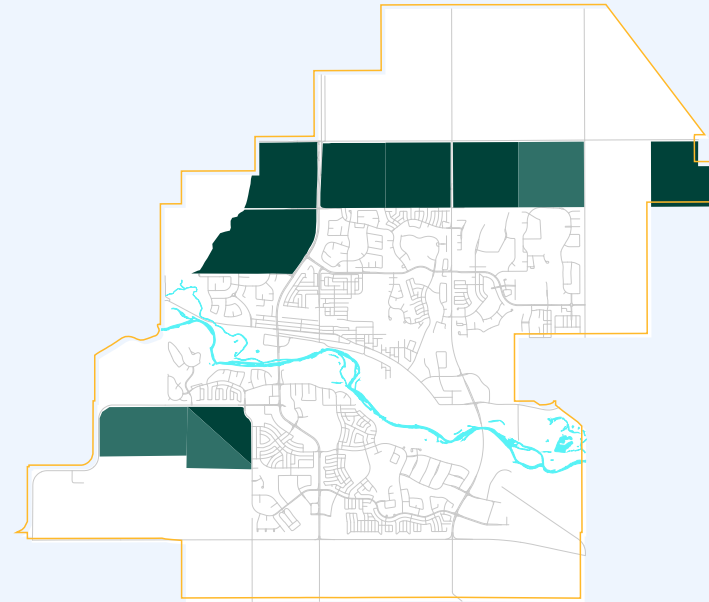
SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)

Figure 24. Phase 1 Horizon



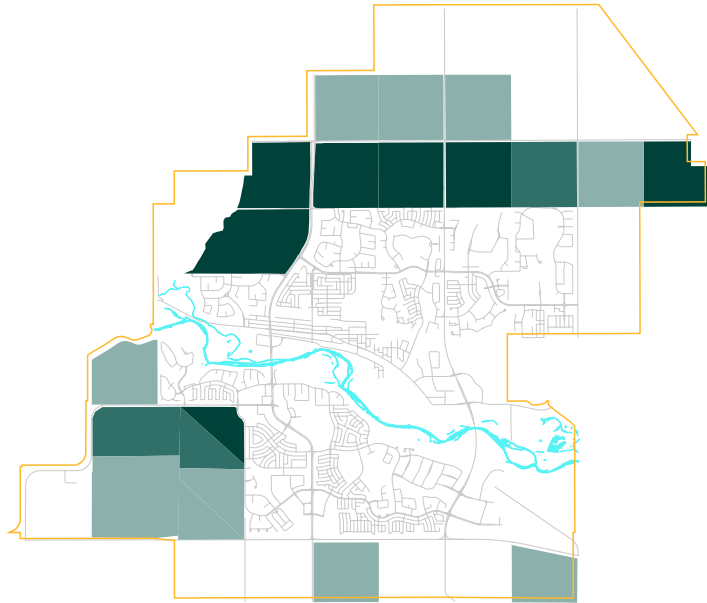
The identified areas generally have area structure plans in place and, in most cases, already have approved neighbourhood plans and/or land use designations. These areas are largely serviced or are in the process of planning for servicing. Planned improvements to sanitary infrastructure will enable future connections to subsequent growth phases. In addition, upgrades to 338th Avenue will be necessary to support access and mobility for these developing areas. Phase 1 also includes strategic non-residential lands that the Town is prioritizing for advancement.

Figure 25. Phase 1 & 2 Horizon



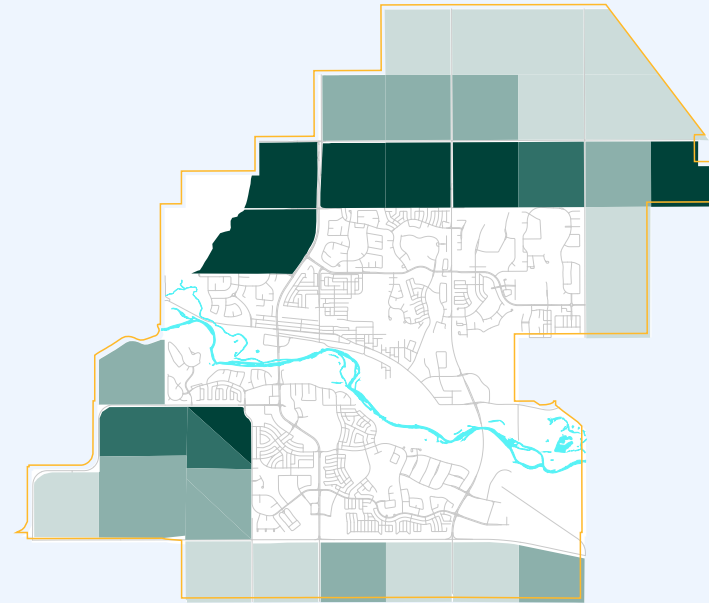
Phase 1 and 2 Horizons highlights areas that have area structure plans in place and represent the next logical areas to be serviced as Phase 1 lands are built out. Servicing in these areas will primarily involve the extension of off-site infrastructure. These lands also include strategic non-residential areas that the Town is actively prioritizing for advancement.

Figure 26. Phase 1, 2 & 3 Horizon



Some of the lands identified in the Phase 3 Horizon have area structure plans in place. Lands on the north side will rely on sanitary improvements initiated through Phase 1 development to advance. Improvements to 338th Avenue will also play a key role in servicing these lands, with costs and capacity shared between developments to the north and south. However, Phase 3 lands in the south are significantly more complex to service and will require major infrastructure investments, including a sanitary sewer trunk, water reservoir, and substantial road upgrades before development can proceed. Lands identified within Phase 3 and 4 are likely to evolve over time; however, Phase 3 lands currently reflect the most likely to advance sooner based on land use, contiguous development and access.

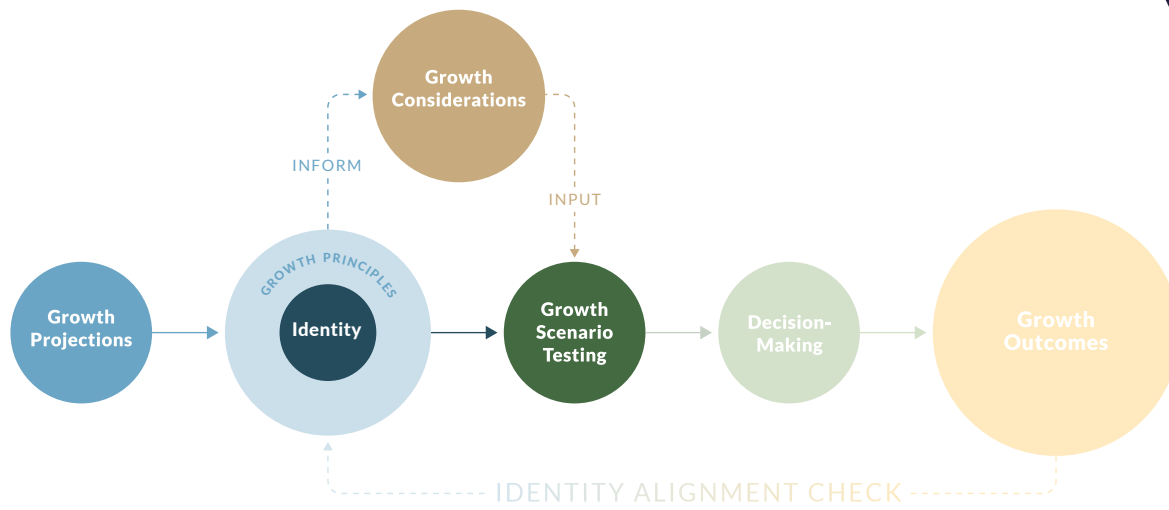
Figure 27. Phase 1, 2, 3 & 4 Horizon



The identified Phase 4 Horizon lands largely do not have area structure plans in place. On the north side sanitary and water extensions are required in early phases to enable future development. On the south side, advancing development will depend on the construction of a significant sanitary trunk and improvements to Highway 7.

5.0

Growth Scenario Testing



Growth scenario testing helps the Town evaluate whether the growth targets outlined in the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) are still the best option for achieving long-term goals or if adjustment of growth targets would better support desired growth outcomes. The MDP includes three main targets as they relate to growth:

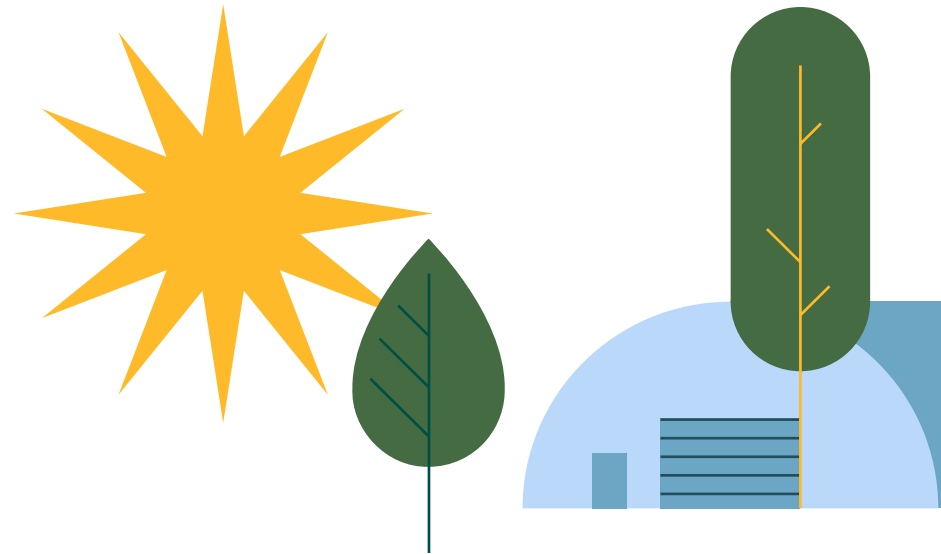
maintaining a housing mix of 60% single detached and 40% multi-family in new communities;

reaching a balanced tax assessment base of 80% residential and 20% non-residential; and,

achieving a 10% infill rate out of total residential units developed.

These targets were developed to support sustainable growth and align with the Town's land capacity and community vision.

The MDP targets were used as a starting point to test alternative "growth scenarios" by adjusting the housing mix, non-residential growth, and infill targets. These alternatives are tested to see how well they align with the Town's Growth Principles. This testing helps the Town determine whether the MDP growth scenario is still the preferred growth scenario, or if changes are needed to better reflect the community's identity, values, and future vision.



Growth and Financial Analysis

As the Town plans for future growth, it's important to understand how new development will impact the Town's finances. A Growth and Fiscal Impact Analysis (GFIA) evaluates whether different types of development—residential, commercial, or industrial—will generate enough revenue through property taxes, user fees, and other sources to cover the costs of new infrastructure, public services, and long-term maintenance.

This analysis provides a clear, data-driven picture of how growth affects the Town's bottom line. The GFIA Model used for this Growth Strategy includes a detailed financial forecast, with costs and revenues linked to specific areas of the Town based on where development is expected and the level of service required. This helps ensure that future growth is not only well-planned, but also that the long-term financial outcomes are considered through the decision-making process.

ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS TESTED

Utilizing the preferred growth rate (3 - 4%), alternative growth scenarios were tested relative to the MDP Growth Scenario and assessed relative to the Growth Principles. While the MDP has set an infill development target of 10%, this was believed to be unachievable over the next 25 years given the amount of infill development currently observed, as well as the amount of available lands for redevelopment. Therefore, 5% was utilized in the sensitivity analysis to see the impact of a more achievable outcome.

Status-Quo Growth

This scenario continues current development trends, with a stronger focus on single detached housing (60%) and current non-residential assessment (12%). It assumes no infill development, meaning all growth occurs in new neighbourhoods.

MDP-Aligned Growth

Based on the targets set in the Okotoks Municipal Development Plan (MDP), this growth scenario maintains a similar housing mix to current patterns (60% single detached, 40% multi-family) but an increased non-residential tax assessment (20%) and infill developments (5% of total units). It reflects long-term community goals for balanced, sustainable growth.

Multi-Family Growth

This scenario shifts toward a more diverse housing mix, with a greater share of multi-family homes (60%) and increased non-residential development (20%). It assumes 5% infill development and supports more compact, higher-density growth in new neighbourhoods.

Compact Growth

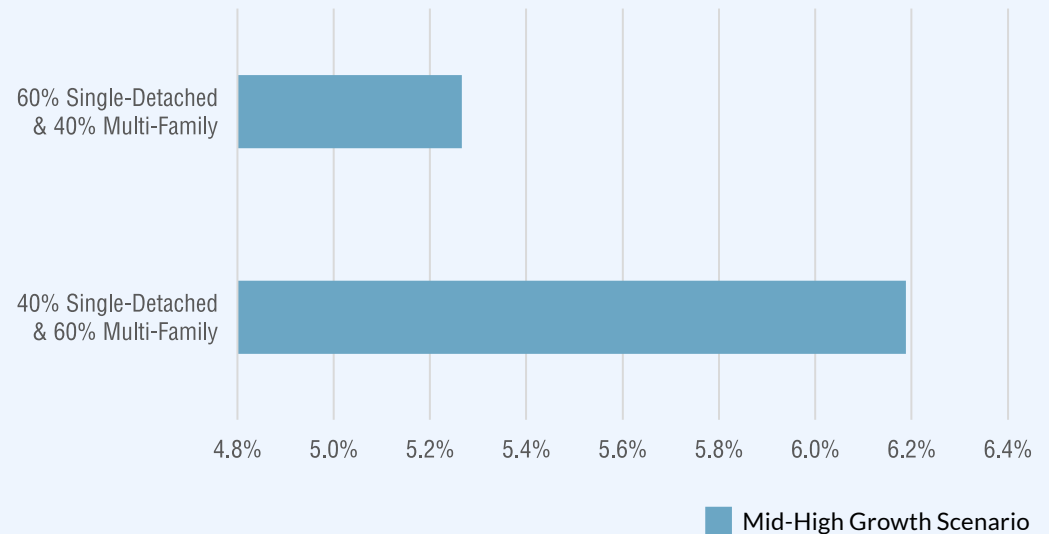
This scenario promotes smart, efficient land use by increasing multi-family housing (60%), supporting more non-residential tax base (20%), and introducing 5% infill development. It encourages more development within existing areas to make better use of infrastructure and services.

Benefits & Impacts of Scenarios for Growth Outcomes

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING MIX

The Multi-Family and Compact Growth Scenarios shift the housing mix toward 60% multi-family housing in new communities, offering both benefits and trade-offs. This mix would represent a significant increase from the Town's current composition of housing, which could potentially support improved environmental outcomes by reducing urban expansion and travel time to daily needs. Multi-family housing can offer more diverse and affordable housing options for people of all ages and abilities, promoting social equity in the community. Economically, higher density housing can create efficiencies in infrastructure delivery, such as shorter pipe lengths and reduced servicing costs. However, in the long-term an over-reliance on multi-family housing can reduce the overall tax assessment yield from residential development, potentially limiting long-term financial returns and outweighing the financial benefits realized from efficient infrastructure delivery. Additionally, as the Town grows based on current trends to attract more families, demand for single detached homes is expected to remain strong. For these reasons, the MDP's housing mix target of 60% single detached and 40% multi-family remains the preferred balance to support social, economic, and environmental objectives.

Figure 28. Alternative Housing Mix Average Tax Impact 2024-2049

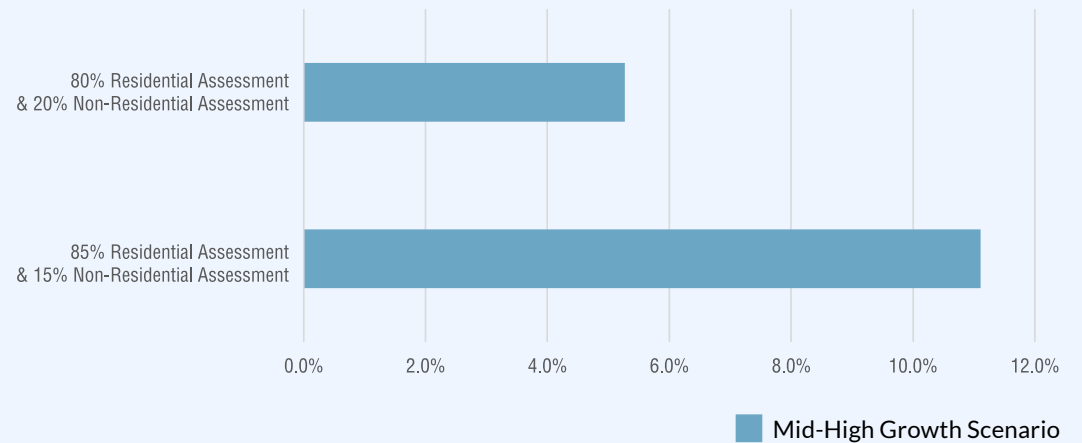


GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT,
APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

ALTERNATIVE TAX ASSESSMENT SPLIT

The MDP Scenario sets a goal of achieving a balanced tax assessment base of 80% residential and 20% non-residential, compared to the current 88% residential share under the Status Quo. Shifting toward more non-residential development, such as commercial, industrial, or institutional uses, reduces the Town's reliance on residential taxpayers to fund services and infrastructure. The GFIA confirms that reaching this 80/20 balance is key to improving the Town's long-term financial sustainability, no matter how fast the community grows. The analysis indicates that average annual tax rate impacts could be reduced by approximately half, as displayed on Figure 29, if the Town is able to generate more non-residential assessment. While achieving this target will require a significant amount of non-residential development, especially under higher growth scenarios, it provides long-term benefits by broadening the tax base, supporting job creation, and helping the Town maintain service levels without placing added pressure on residents. Meeting this target will require a carefully coordinated and focused effort to attract new commercial and industrial investment, particularly in the face of strong regional competition.

Figure 29. Alternative Tax Assessment Average Tax Impact 2024-2049

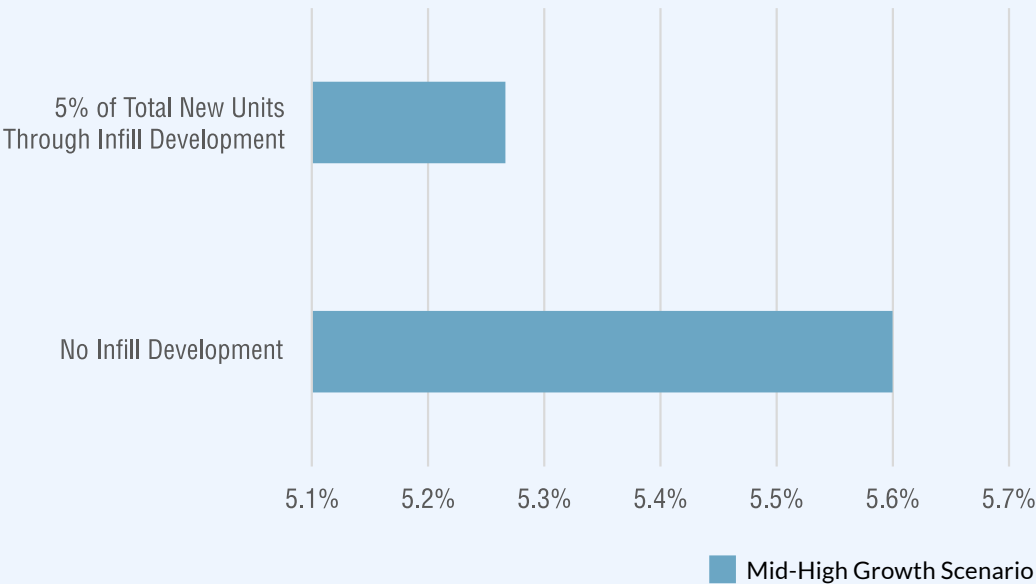


GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT, APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

ALTERNATIVE INFILL TARGET

A target infill rate of 10%, as outlined in the MDP Growth Scenario, offers meaningful advantages that are lost when all growth is directed to new neighbourhoods—as seen in the Status Quo and Multi-Family scenarios. Infill development tends to make better use of existing infrastructure, amenities, and services, reducing the cost of growth. Infill supports the Town’s long-term sustainability goals by bringing people closer to daily amenities, and promoting alternative modes of transportation (e.g. walking, cycling and transit). It also helps create more complete, connected, and inclusive communities by filling strategic gaps—such as adding multi-family or affordable housing near transit, schools, and social services and vice versa. For local businesses, infill brings residents closer to commercial areas, increasing foot traffic and helping make commercial hubs more vibrant and viable. The GFIA also shows that infill is one of the most financially efficient ways to accommodate growth, with shorter infrastructure networks and lower servicing costs.

Figure 30. Average Tax Impact (2024 - 2049)



GROWTH AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS TECHNICAL REPORT,
APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT (MAY, 2025)

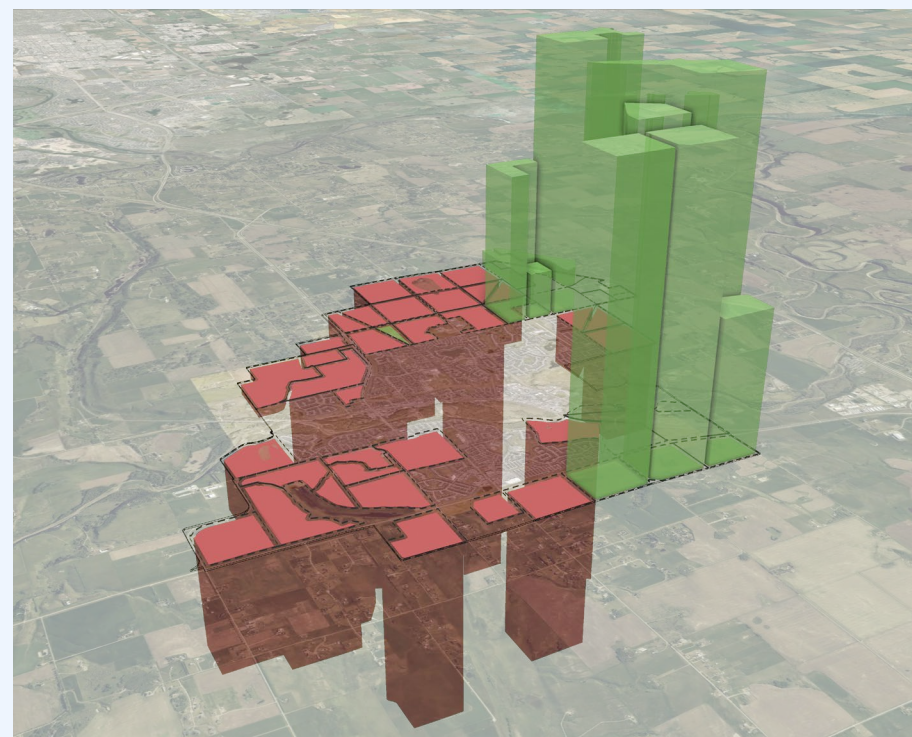
NET FISCAL CONTRIBUTION OF GROWTH

The fiscal contribution analysis provides a point-in-time snapshot of how residential, mixed-use, and non-residential areas contribute to a balanced, complete community. While not all areas are expected to be fully built out by 2049, the analysis highlights their combined financial performance and underscores the importance of assessing overall fiscal impact to support Okotoks' long-term growth goals.

Figure 31 shows the projected net fiscal contribution of growth in Okotoks by 2049, the final year of the Strategy's forecast. It provides a snapshot of the positive and negative financial contributions by geographic area based on the following assumptions:

- A mid-high growth rate of 4%
- An 80% residential / 20% non-residential assessment split
- The known development mix in active and planned areas
- MDP housing targets for unplanned areas (60% single-detached, 40% multi-residential)
- Projected property tax rates and related revenues
- Capital and operating cost estimates for servicing existing and future lands

Figure 31. Projected Fiscal Contribution (2049 Snapshot) - Mid-High Scenario



- Growth Areas
- Negative Fiscal Contribution
- Positive Fiscal Contribution

SOURCE: LAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS, URBAN SYSTEMS (MAY, 2025)



PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO

The Town's preferred growth scenario reflects a rate of growth that is balanced (3-4%) and considers the financial, social and environmental implications of rapid and slow growth. The preferred growth scenario also reflects a sequence of growth that is **Strategic and Adaptive** and aligns with the Town's long-term aspirations.



Additionally, the preferred growth scenario aligns with the Town's MDP targets around housing diversity, intensification of established areas and an increased residential-to-non-residential tax base.



The collective outcome of the Town's preferred approach to growth will help create **Complete and Integrated Communities** with a range of housing types and nearby services. It also advances **Environmental Stewardship** by encouraging compact development patterns which can conserve land and protect natural assets. The preferred approach will also advance non-residential growth and support local job growth, nurturing a **Strong Local Economy**, while offering people more opportunities to live and work locally, building a more **Socially Connected** Okotoks.

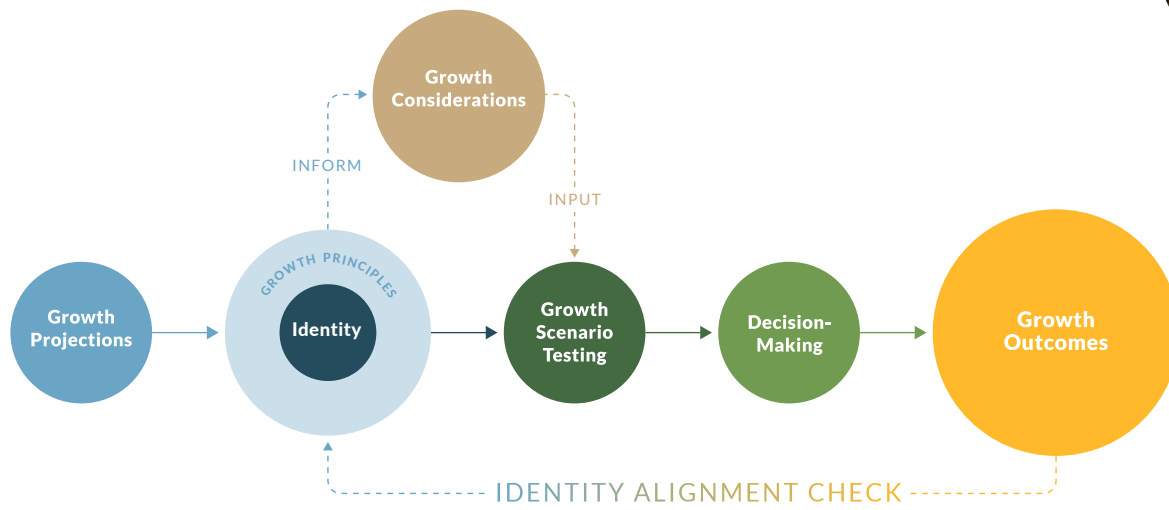


While the MDP targets remain a strong foundation for growth, some elements, particularly the viability of achieving non-residential and infill growth targets over the next 25 years, require further validation. Unlocking this potential will likely demand the Town to be **Strategic and Adaptive** in its approach, targeting investments that ensure these areas are both market-ready and aligned with the Town's economic goals.



6.0

Growth Management Framework



The Growth Management Framework provides a roadmap for achieving the Town's Preferred Growth Scenario, while managing growth in a way that supports its long-term vision and community priorities. Rooted in the Town's identity, the framework is designed to guide growth in a way that not only reflects who the community is today but also reinforces who it aspires to become. It includes targets and measures to monitor growth over time, along with a range of decisions and actions that influence how quickly growth occurs within Okotoks. By offering a balanced and flexible approach, the framework ensures that growth is intentional, aligned with community values, and reinforces our community identity.

How can we steward growth?

Growth is dynamic and complex, shaped by factors such as market demand, immigration, and broader economic trends—many of which extend beyond the Town's direct influence. While the pace of growth is important to monitor and manage from a long-term perspective, it is not something the Town can fully manage at a nuanced level. What the Town can meaningfully shape is **how** growth unfolds.

As a steward of the community's long-term well-being, the Town plays a key role in guiding growth through thoughtful, responsive decision-making. At the Town's disposal is a variety of fiscal, planning and regulatory governance decision and advocacy opportunities which can guide and direct growth in a way that is reflective of its identity, long-term goals, and community values. By considering the impacts and trade-offs in decision-making and by applying more rigour to evaluation – the Town can ensure that future development contributes towards its goals and reinforces community values and Town identity.

Growth Management Opportunities

At a high-level, there are a range of tools that the Town can utilize to influence growth, such as strategic and policy planning, investments, partnerships, regulatory mechanisms and/or incentives. Each of these tools varies in their effectiveness, complexity, and risk, which must be carefully considered and applied to ensure alignment with the Town's long-term objectives.

Additionally, managing growth in an intentional way requires significant resources and ongoing monitoring, reflection and refinement. This can be challenging, as external factors may change rapidly, while the effects of those changes often unfold more gradually over time. As conditions that influence growth shift it's essential that the Town remains adaptable in its approach but focused on its desired outcomes.



**Strategic Planning
& Investment:
Budget Prioritization**

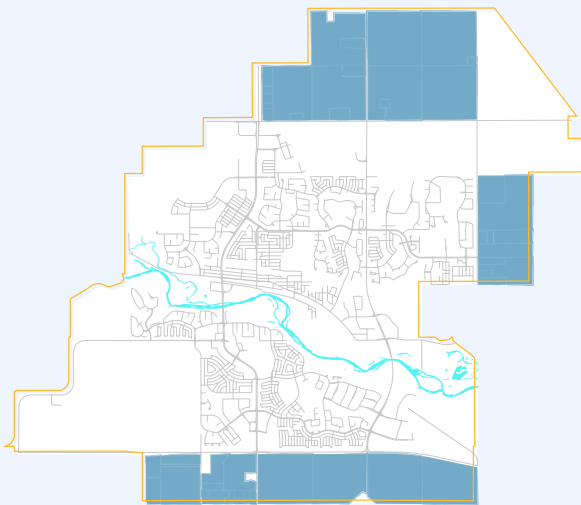


**Comprehensive &
Regulatory Planning:
Bylaw Considerations**



**Partnerships:
Advocacy**

Figure 32. Unplanned Lands



SOURCE: ARCGIS PRO



STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS: BUDGET PRIORITIZATION

Strategic planning and investment is a foundational growth management method that enables the Town to make informed, values-driven decisions that reflect its identity, long-term intentions and consider the financial impacts on the Town. It clarifies strategic priorities and trade-offs, guiding where, when, and how growth occurs—especially through infrastructure investments.

By communicating strategic priorities along with funding, financing, and risk-sharing for infrastructure and programs, the Town demonstrates how these investments align with its long-term goals. Prioritizing and sequencing investments shapes the pace and location of growth by activating employment lands, incentivizing infill and redevelopment, and fostering social connectedness and belonging.

By identifying what matters most – such as the protection of natural assets, viability of desired future land uses, the desired development sequence or social needs – strategic planning and investment shapes growth in Okotoks.

Thoughtful and continual strategic planning also provides certainty to development partners, as it signals what the Town is trying to achieve.



COMPREHENSIVE AND REGULATORY PLANNING: BYLAW CONSIDERATIONS

Comprehensive and regulatory planning, adopted as bylaws, are key tools for managing growth. Planning shapes both how the community grows at the neighbourhood and site level, and influences how quickly growth can occur. The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and area structure plans (ASPs) set the long-term vision, controlling where, when, and how quickly Okotoks grows. These plans integrate community goals with expert input to guide neighborhood and site-level development over time.

Approving a new ASP is a critical commitment that shapes Okotoks' long-term growth. While it attracts investment and accelerates development, opening new lands can spur rapid growth, create new infrastructure demands, and risk excess capacity. Approvals must be carefully timed and phased to align with the Town's infrastructure, servicing, and market readiness to avoid overextending resources."

As planning progresses from ASPs to NASPs and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB), the Town's role shifts from directing growth to implementing established visions. Regulatory tools like the LUB and development guidelines shape outcomes with flexibility, enabling support for initiatives such as affordable housing, transit-oriented development, infill, and redevelopment. These tools help align private development with public goals.



PARTNERSHIPS: ADVOCACY

Partnerships enable the Town to advance growth goals by combining resources and advocacy. Collaborations with developers address market gaps and community needs, while partnerships with the province and regional municipalities coordinate efforts in economic development, housing, infrastructure, and environmental protection. Locally, working with community groups enhances programs and ensures growth benefits all residents. These alliances strengthen the Town's long-term goals through shared expertise and support.

Relationship to Growth Principles and Identity

Every growth-related decision the Town makes—whether through planning policies, infrastructure investments, or regulatory tools—should be guided by its established growth principles. These principles serve as a compass, ensuring that the use of growth levers supports Okotoks' long-term vision and reinforces its distinctive identity. Each growth tool or strategy the Town employs has a tangible impact on shaping how Okotoks evolves. By consistently aligning decisions with growth principles, the Town can ensure that growth is not only well-guided, but is also reflective of the values, character, and aspirations that define the community.



**Socially
Connected**



**Strong
Local Economy**



**Environmental
Stewards**



**Complete & Integrated
Communities**



**Strategic & Adaptive
in Our Approach**

Growth Management Framework

Growth is a complex and evolving process. The Town should revisit this growth management framework and its recommendations often to ensure alignment with changing conditions and priorities. The following monitoring framework outlines aspirational targets the Town aims to achieve by 2050, alongside specific measures that will help track progress and inform future decisions.



GROWTH PRINCIPLE*Why and how we do something*

As we grow, we are
Socially Connected

**DESIRED OUTCOME***What we want to achieve, what we need to measure progress towards*

Okotoks is a socially connected, resilient community where diverse housing fosters inclusion, safety, and unity, supported by local opportunities and reduced barriers to neighborly participation.

KEY ACTIONS*What we need to do***STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS (BUDGET)**

- In prioritizing project funding, ensure that balanced priority is given to projects, programs and initiatives that facilitate social connectedness, inclusion and participation
- Allocation of budget to implementing Social Needs Assessment and Strategy
- Adoption of the Events Strategy and allocation of budgets to facilitate priorities that further social connectedness and opportunities for community participation
- Allocation of budget to priority transit outcomes to enhance opportunities for transportation to services, programs and events

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING (BYLAWS)

- Require that prior to accepting applications for new ASP or NASP, proponents demonstrate how social connectedness measures and housing affordability are supported
- Ensure that new ASPs and NASPs include policies to facilitate social connectedness
- Update the ASP and NASP Terms of Reference to include requirements for a business case prior to the Town deciding to accept a new ASP for development and adoption
- Development of a business case template including evaluation criteria for decision-making

PARTNERSHIPS (ADVOCACY)

- Regularly survey Community Social Needs
- Collaboration with higher orders of government to advocate for funding for projects and programs
- Collaboration with social advocacy groups and non-for profits to assist program delivery

SUCCESS MEASURES*What we want to see***DIVERSE HOUSING CHOICE**

- Number of housing starts
- % of new housing units that meet affordability targets
- Increase in number and variety of housing types (e.g., duplexes, co-housing, rentals, supportive housing)

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

- % of residents who report a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood/ community
- % of residents who know their neighbours
- Number of residents feeling respected (individual identity, background, values) in the community
- Transit ridership

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

- Number and type of community programs offered
- Number of residents reporting enough Town spaces and opportunities to connect with others
- % of residents who report that Town programs are accessible and inclusive
- Reduction of barriers to participation reported by residents

GROWTH PRINCIPLE

Why and how we do something

As we grow, we are **Environmental Stewards**



DESIRED OUTCOME

What we want to achieve, what we need to measure progress towards

Okotoks is an environmentally conscious community that reduces its impact by integrating innovative solutions to lower emissions, conserve resources, and incorporate natural assets into sustainable urban design.

KEY ACTIONS

What we need to do

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS (BUDGET)

- Complete, adopt and implement Okotoks' Natural and Naturalized Assets Inventory and policy development
- Complete, adopt and implement that Town's Sustainable Building Guidelines
- Update the Town's Water Allocation Policy

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING (BYLAWS)

- Require proponents, before submitting new ASP or NASP applications, to demonstrate how their proposals support the Town's goals for reducing environmental impact—including protecting natural assets, managing land absorption, conserving and reusing water, enabling passive heating, and reducing emissions.
- Explore strengthening environmental policy to require developments to demonstrate environmental stewardship ("must vs encourage")
- Require that planning applications at all levels include an analysis of a proposal's contribution to environmental stewardship through sustainable design practices
- Development of the Town's Land Supply Inventory to allow monitoring of natural asset retention
- Study regulatory methods that would assist or incentivise environmental stewardship for site specific and neighbourhood development projects
- Ensure all planning policy documents are in alignment with the updated Provincial Flood Hazard Mapping

PARTNERSHIPS (ADVOCACY)

- Continue to expand environmental education opportunities, inviting community participation as well as delivery through other media

SUCCESS MEASURES

What we want to see

EMISSION REDUCTION MEASURES

- Number of publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging ports in Okotoks (Level 2 or higher)

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

- Summer Peak Water Usage reduction: Litres/capita/day
- Total residential potable water usage: litres per capita per day;
- Utilization of Water Conservation Incentive Programs

NATURAL ASSET INTEGRATION

- Urban forest canopy coverage and change over time
- Percentage of land preserved/enhanced as natural assets in ASPs/NASPs

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN

- Percentage of non-potable water used for public parks and landscaping
- Length of pathway system (m/ha) of primary pathway
- Urban Connectivity Score (to be assessed for development)
- Number of trips made using Okotoks Transit

GROWTH PRINCIPLE

Why and how we do something

As we grow, we retain and nurture a **Strong Local Economy**



DESIRED OUTCOME

What we want to achieve, what we need to measure progress towards

Okotoks is positioned as a hub for economic growth by attracting and supporting current and future businesses and associated employment through strategically planned land, partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and diverse housing options.

KEY ACTIONS

What we need to do

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS (BUDGET)

- Complete and adopt a business attraction and retention strategy, including consideration of incentives
- Complete and adopt the Tourism Strategy
- Define Okotoks' competitive advantage for marketing
- Allocate infrastructure investments to support servicing of employment lands to allow business attraction and assessment diversification

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING (BYLAWS)

- Require proponents, before submitting new ASP, ARP, or NASP applications, to demonstrate how their proposal supports Okotoks' local economy by increasing employment lands, balancing assessment revenues, and incorporating innovative design
- Develop the Town's Land Supply Inventory to allow monitoring of the available employment lands to support business attraction and decision making on additional land release. Study regulatory methods that would assist or incentivise employment-generating/mixed-use projects or increasing housing choice

PARTNERSHIPS (ADVOCACY)

- Connect and partner with local business associations
- Partner with post-secondary/continuing education institutions and the private sector to anchor an Innovation Precinct

SUCCESS MEASURES

What we want to see

BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

- Number of net new resident business licenses issued per year
- Number of new investment inquiries

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Work force residing and working within Okotoks versus commuting

STRATEGIC LAND USE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Area of employment lands planned and serviced
- Absorption rate (ha/year) of employment lands

PARTNERSHIPS

- Number of partnerships with established learning organizations that lead to work force qualifications aligned with Okotoks' Economic Development priority sectors

HOUSING DIVERSITY TO SUPPORT WORKFORCE NEEDS

- % of residents who report affordable housing availability as a barrier to employment
- Housing starts by type and tenure (e.g., rental, multi-family, single-detached)

OVERALL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE MEASURE

- Growth in non-residential tax base
- Number and value of incentives for priority sectors

GROWTH PRINCIPLE

Why and how we do something

As we grow, we have **Complete and Integrated Communities**



DESIRED OUTCOME

What we want to achieve, what we need to measure progress towards

Okotoks is a complete and well-connected community that balances housing and employment uses, support residents' daily needs through accessible multi-modal design, and integrates green spaces for recreation and well-being.

KEY ACTIONS

What we need to do

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS (BUDGETS)

- Regularly review population and employment growth forecasts, infrastructure requirements and costs/benefit analysis to inform investment priorities for inclusion in the Town's budget
- Regularly review and update the Town's Off-site levy bylaw, including consideration of alternative funding opportunities for growth-related projects
- Allocate funding to social programs to bring to life initiatives that address identified social needs.

COMPREHENSIVE AND REGULATORY PLANNING

- Require proponents, before submitting new ASP or NASP applications, to demonstrate how their proposals support complete, integrated communities—addressing capital and operating costs and revenues, phased investments, neighborhood design, housing diversity and affordability, social connectedness, and environmental stewardship.
- Explore how policies could enable prioritization of development phases that create local employment, vertical mixed use and affordable/non-market housing.

PARTNERSHIPS (ADVOCACY)

- Community and industry partnerships to build understanding around the need for housing and denser forms of housing
- Collaboration with higher orders of government to advocate for funding for projects and programs
- Collaboration with social advocacy groups and non-for profits to assist program delivery to activate new communities

SUCCESS MEASURES

What we want to see

HOUSING DIVERSITY AND AFFORDABILITY

- Okotoks Housing mix of approximately 60% Single Family and 40% Multi Family housing
- Number of purpose-built rental units and non-market housing
- Average residential unit density in new communities of 12 upa

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

- Percentage of dwelling units within a 400m radial walk shed of a neighbourhood hub
- Percentage of dwelling units within a 400m radial walk shed of a recreation facility, park or cultural facility hub
- Urban Connectivity Score

EMPLOYMENT USE

- Footprint of employment space by type created within the community

GREEN AND OPEN SPACE

- Parks and reserve space per capita
- Length of pathway system

GROWTH PRINCIPLE

Why and how we do something

As we grow, we are **Strategic and Adaptive in our Approach.**



DESIRED OUTCOME

What we want to achieve, what we need to measure progress towards

Okotoks is a fiscally responsible community that aligns growth with long-term infrastructure needs, explores alternative funding options, and requires new developments to support growth principles, with growth regularly monitored and managed to ensure it meets the desired outcomes.

KEY ACTIONS

What we need to do

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS (BUDGET)

- Develop business case templates and evaluation criteria to assess whether new ASP proposals align with and achieve the Town's growth objectives
- Develop a monitoring framework and allocate resources to enable regular reporting on growth outcomes and improve data integration.
- Regularly review growth-related infrastructure costs and revenues to adjust phasing and ensure the Town's financial sustainability

COMPREHENSIVE AND REGULATORY PLANNING (BYLAWS)

- Regularly review the Town's Offsite Levy Bylaw to communicate the Town's infrastructure funding expectations
- Review the Town's Water Allocation Policy to communicate a consistent water allocation process for new development
- Develop the Town's Land Supply Inventory to allow monitoring of the Town's planned and serviced land supply across land use typologies, to support decision making on additional land release and resourcing needs for expected growth and permitting volume
- Ensure long-term planning addresses growth within intermunicipal corridors and provides for regional environmental stewardship and shared economic development initiatives
- Address barriers to infill and redevelopment

PARTNERSHIPS (ADVOCACY)

- Coordination with regional municipalities regarding growth trends and growth corridors

SUCCESS MEASURES

What we want to see

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

- Population Growth
- Labour Force
- Okotoks Job Growth
- Housing Starts

LAND SUPPLY INVENTORY

- Maintain 25 years of Planned Land
- Maintain 5 years of Serviced Land Supply for residential, commercial and industrial use

COSTS AND REVENUES

- Maintain an average annual growth rate of 3% to 4% by dwelling unit starts
- % of growth-related infrastructure costs recovered through off-site levies or developer contributions
- Property tax assessment split of 80% residential and 20% non-residential

ALTERNATIVE AND DIVERSIFIED FUNDING OPTIONS

- % of capital projects funded through alternative sources (e.g., grants, public-private partnerships, levies)

MONITORING, REPORTING, AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Frequency of growth monitoring reports (e.g., quarterly, annual)

Appendix A

Land Supply Analysis Memo,
Urban Systems Ltd., 2025



Appendix B

Growth and Financial Analysis Technical
Report, Applications Management
Consulting Limited, 2025



Appendix C

Servicing Strategy Brief, ISL, 2025

